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Delegates develop vision for Ministry at Canadian Ministry Forum

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Jessie Schut

EDMONTON — Many Canadian Christian Reformed Churches have recently celebrated their fiftieth anniversaries, or are making plans to. The stories told at these celebrations are about hardships overcome, projects undertaken, institutions being founded, and many blessings experienced.

For these churches, and indeed, all Reformed churches whose roots trace back to the post-war immigration, the question now is: "What's next?" Is there a vision for where God may be leading the church in the future?

Vision for future critical

Vision for the future is critical, said Bill Veenstra as he addressed participants at the Canadian Ministry Forum (CMF) held at The King's University College in Edmonton May 30-June 1. Close to 100 delegates from across Canada representing all 12 CRC Classes gathered in what many described as a grassroots mini-Synod to cast vision and develop goals and strategies for future ministry. Also present at the meeting were Canadian members of the Board of Trustees (BOT), personnel from denominational offices, and representatives of CRC agencies.

"I hope you have a vision for working together for the purpose of Jesus Christ, so our children will not see division, but hearts drawn together in common purpose," he told delegates. "Immigration has shaped us, but our shaping is over. Now we need to move forward, to work in this world."

Challenging, exciting task

Following Veenstra's introduction, delegates spent the next three days working at this challenging but exciting task. The delegates shared stories of best practices in their own churches, developed a list of important distinctives, cast



JESSIE SCHUT

Participants in the Canadian Ministry Forum held in Edmonton.

vision for four different ministry priorities, and finally added goals and strategies to the vision.

The Forum was preceded last year by 15 Canada-wide regional meetings called "Conversations among the Churches." At these meetings, which brought together representatives from almost every church, participants shared stories of their best practices in order to encourage and support each other. They also listed activities and ideas they felt the church should work to achieve, preserve, or avoid. (See www.crcna.org and follow links to the Canadian Ministry Forum to view results of the

conversations, and to read about the 40 best practices shared at the regional meetings.)

The Forum was also developed around the "Ministries Plan for Agencies and Institutions of the CRC", a BOT document that articulates four ministry priorities: church development ministries (growing strong congregations), leadership development, integrated ministry to children and youth, and outreach and discipling. Visions, goals and strategies in these four areas will be presented to the BOT as recommendations to shape and guide ministry and impact agency planning.

The gathered delegates were a diverse group drawn from Vancouver to Halifax and all points in between. Classes had been urged to balance their delegates between lay and professional, women and men, young and old, and to ensure that persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities were also included. Delegates included white-haired grandmothers, half a dozen

teens, campus ministers, and persons of color. In spite of the diversity, common themes arose over and over again in each of the four groups.

One persistent theme was the need for leadership training. Christians are living in a fast-changing, complex world and presented with an array of ministry opportunities

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CMF participants view selves in Posterski's mirror

Jessie Schut

EDMONTON — A highlight for many who participated in the Canadian Ministry Forum was a speech by Don Posterski on May 31.

Posterski is the Vice-President of National Programs for World Vision Canada, and Associate Professor in Christianity and Culture at McMaster Divinity College. He has written many books, including *Where's A Good Church?* which he co-authored with Irwin Barker.

Virtues and vulnerabilities

Posterski, whom Canadian Ministries Director Bill Veenstra described as "a friend of the CRC," was invited to talk on the topic "Called to Minister in the Canadian Context." Instead, Posterski's speech might have been called "A Friend Holds up a Mirror to the CRC." He described the virtues and vulnerabilities he observes in the Canadian CRC in 2002, and while his speech addressed CRC members, it could well apply to other churches whose roots lie in a Dutch Reformed identity.

His speech came after carefully studying the Ministries Plan for Agencies and Institutions of the CRC, a 26-page report that was

required reading for all participants. The report recently has been prepared by the Board of Trustees to guide agencies as they plan ministry, and includes an extended identity statement which describes what it means to have a Reformed perspective.

Know who you are

Posterski prefaced his remarks with a caution, however. He said, "Self-definition is a critical process. Many CRC churches in Canada are 50 years old, that is a vulnerable time. Some organizations in their third generation spin away from their roots and original vision. In this time of diversity, I would say: know who you are. There is virtue in listening to outside voices, but some of the stuff I am going to tell you will not be as important as what your own voices are saying."

He began by listing the virtues he sees in the CRC. First, he said, you're a people of principle who take time to think things through. "I look at your documents, like 'Our World Belongs to God' — you qualify for sainthood if you can live up to this document!"

Posterski also praised the
See **POSTERSKI** page 2...

News

Need for leadership training a persistent conference theme

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for which they are not prepared. Leadership training enhances ministry as workers feel equipped and more confident, and as they learn about the pitfalls and joys of ministry.

Participants often identified mentoring as a tool to train leaders. In a mentoring relationship, a trusted and experienced guide walks alongside a beginner. Mentoring is often applied to youthful relationships with older people, but it can also happen amongst program leaders, between churches, and even classes.

Mentoring is a passion

Paul Pousette, associate pastor of youth at Ladner CRC in Delta, BC, works with 35 youth and 35 young adults in his church. "Mentoring is my passion," he says. "Multiplication of leaders is so important, if you don't multiply your leaders, you are in danger of dying."

"We can identify youthful leaders, and we can encourage, train and equip them, so that they develop their leadership skills

incrementally. This forum was an affirmation and encouragement for me to continue doing this. It's process, not program, that's the mindset we need."

Duane Kelderman, vice-president for administration at Calvin Seminary, agrees that leadership training is extremely important in view of the diverse ministry opportunities. "We need to train leaders at a deep level so they can take their learning and apply it to different settings," he said. He points to the Home Missions' regional training program Leadership Development Network as a way to co-operatively train lay leaders.

Another theme was the importance of a strong spiritual life in individuals and congregations. Participants in the forum on church development recommended that classes hold renewal conferences and/or establish spiritual retreat centres. Congregations can emphasize the importance of prayer through teaching and establishing active prayer ministries and prayer co-ordinators. Prayer and spiritual vitality is essential for developing a mission-minded ministry, said

delegates, urging seminaries to place a high value on training and possibly re-training leaders to catch a vision for mission.

Hands-on service

Other important themes dealt with hands-on service and the full integration of youth's gifts into the local congregation.

"Often, we picture the church like this," said 18-year-old Darryl Andree of Hamilton, as he held one hand higher than the other. "The adults are up here, the children and youth are down here. But what we'd like to see is this," and he laced his fingers together. "We want to be part of it all together."

"If there's no development of our gifts, that's a real shame," said Yvonne Takacs, 17, of Listowel, Ontario. "There are so many gifts we can use, and if we don't learn how to use them, that's a shame." As a member of the leadership team of the Trillium League for young people, Takacs has helped to organize youth services, retreats, and other events for the 22 churches in her league. She says she has experienced the

mentorship of older people, leaders with a passion for youth.

Results affirmed by all

When the final results of the ministry study groups were presented to delegates, they unanimously affirmed the document which will be presented to the Board of Trustees for implementation. It was a strong endorsement, and a fitting conclusion to a time of creative thinking and Spirit-generated excitement.

But the question, "What will happen now?" was also high in peoples' minds. "That's a good question," said Peter Borgdorff, Executive Director of Ministries for the CRC. "Formally, the data gathered here will be merged into the BOT report and ministry plan. It needs to be processed in such a way that local churches can grab hold of these ideas and adopt them for themselves. It's clear that one size of ministry does not fit all."

Ralph Pypker of Bowmanville, Ontario, a five-time delegate to Synod, and presently on the BOT, appreciated the affirmation he received about ministry directions

and priorities. "The outcome of this, I hope, will have a major impact on the ministry of the CRC, perhaps even more impact than decisions of Synod. People here are setting directions for what we should be doing. But the whole trick now is to find a way to have this work trickle down to the person in the pew."

As participants packed up to go home, they expressed an overwhelming thankfulness to have been part of a ground-breaking process. At the closing worship, several youth stood and thanked participants for giving them a sense of belonging, for valuing their contributions. Others spoke of the conviction that the Holy Spirit guided the deliberations. Many spoke of the affirmation they got, knowing that their ministry and their involvement was making a difference. All were encouraged to know that they were part of a community which valued their gifts.

"It was just a privilege to be here," Pauline Drenth said, speaking for all who participated.

Posterski praises positive values of CRC

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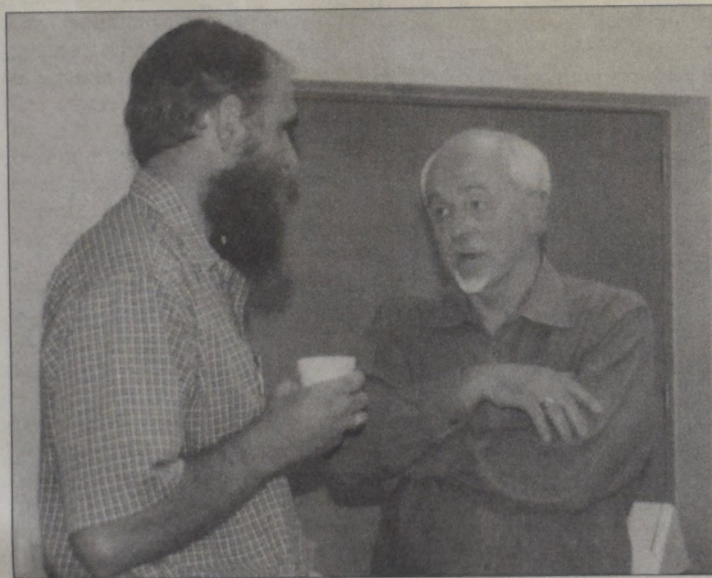
CRC's commitment to quality and careful analysis. He said. "To influence the world in this day and age, if you don't have quality, you won't be taken seriously." As well, he highlighted the importance of order and intellectual integrity, both qualities which the CRC values. "Your intellectual quality shapes your spirituality," Posterski said. "You are clearly defined and coherent. These are important qualities you can bring to the Kingdom table."

All of these virtues, said Posterski, are evidenced in the CRC's concern for children. The church highly values the spiritual shaping of its youth and children, as shown in the considerable sacrifices that have been made for Christian education and higher learning.

Pinpointing vulnerabilities

But Posterski was also ready to pinpoint vulnerabilities, some which are the flip side of the virtues. The issues, he said, must be dealt with if the church is to become a mission-minded church — one that is healthy, where people are growing, where there is a celebration of people's gifts, an affirmation of people's ministry.

"You have full heads but have the risk of hungry hearts," he said.



Don Posterski (right) in conversation at the Canadian Ministries Forum.

"To reach out to touch a broken society around you, you need to know that people are longing for a warm touch more than a full head. I wonder if the hunger for prayer that many of you have expressed is an expression of your own hunger."

Posterski pointed out the Ministries Plan as an example of a full head. "You have labored over your identity statement: 26 pages, nicely ordered, nothing out of place. But are you really like that?

Is your life that way, your church?" Most people's messy lives can't be captured neatly and tidily on paper.

Intriguing seeking hearts

It's incarnational living, not words, that nurture people's spirits, says Posterski. Are you present in other people's lives, in work, in the neighborhood?

The CRC's beautiful Reformed theology is also in large part meaningless to a society where

categorical truths are not valued. To reach out and draw in people who are struggling to find Christ, the church must make room for ambiguity and uncertainty. "If we do not have a humble hermeneutic, we can keep the faithful faithful, but we will not intrigue the seeking heart," he warned.

Posterski challenged the CRC to be "solid at the centre, softer at the edges." What would you write on a napkin at the donut shop over a cup of coffee if your friend says, "You seem to spend a lot of time at church, what's that all about?" It should be the core of what you believe. If you have too much at the solid centre, you won't be able to touch the outside. In order to figure out what is at the core, he asked, can you synthesize your great systematic theology and show us how it works?

Worshipping traditions?

Posterski also wondered whether the CRC worships traditions. "Traditions do a lot of wonderful things, they give us strength, but they also fill us with fear that we can not live up to them," he said. "Traditions write in indelible ink, not in erasable pencil. Traditions drive us to preserve and don't give us permission to delete." In valuing traditions too highly, people may never make room for

delightful surprises that come with new and creative thinking.

Find a balance between conviction and compassion, he urged. Leave room for more than just your primary commitments.

And finally, Posterski suggested, the CRC may want to reconsider the issue of membership. While the church may think of membership as something that indicates study and agreement and a definite decision, the people who cross the church threshold as visitors and seekers have a different point of view. Anyone who does come to church as a seeker is already going against the culture, since only about 20 per cent of Canadians have a regular affiliation with an established church. Most seekers think in terms of belonging, not membership. If they show up three times or more, they've already indicated they consider themselves as members.

"Are you a mission-minded church?" concluded Posterski. "In such a church, membership questions are secondary, belonging is first. There are fewer filters, the church is more inclusive. Effective mission-minded churches begin with whoever is in the pews, then teach them to become effective witnesses.... You need to be brave enough to answer this question, and to look at it carefully."

JUNE 17, 2002

News/Politics

The Harvard mouse that roared

Alan Doerksen

OTTAWA — Why would two major Christian organizations — Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) and Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) — be involved in a court case about patenting a mouse? Although on the surface it sounds ridiculous, there are in fact big issues at stake which concern the two agencies. For one thing, if a mouse can be patented, why not a human being?

The Supreme Court case in question involves the Harvard mouse (a.k.a. the oncomouse) — a genetically-altered rodent that Harvard University researchers have developed to have a tendency to get

cancer. Back in 1995, Harvard applied to the Canadian government for a patent on the mouse itself, as well as the processes which made it prone to cancer. At that time, the Canadian Commissioner of Patents (a government agency) agreed to patent the processes, but refused to patent the mouse.

But in August 2000, Canada's Federal Court of Appeal reversed that situation, allowing Harvard a patent for the mouse. Now the issue is before the Supreme Court of Canada, which held a hearing May 21 in which the Canadian Commissioner of Patents challenged Harvard's right to patent the oncomouse. EFC and CCC were

involved as interveners in that case, along with several environmental agencies, such as Greenpeace Canada and the Sierra Club.

EFC has some big concerns about this issue.

New wine in old skins

Bruce Clemenger, director of EFC's Centre for Faith and Public Life in Ottawa, points out that one key problem with this case is that "the new genetic technology is the new wine," but Canada's Patent Act is "the old wineskin."

"We're saying the Patent Act wasn't intended to include the mouse," he asserts. But Harvard is using a "mechanistic model

applied to life forms" — referring to a mouse as "a composition of matter."

"The Harvard factum [legal presentation] kept referring to technologies — one of those technologies was a mouse," he explains. Using this same logic, "there's no reason this cannot apply to human beings," Clemenger warns.

There is nothing in the Patent Act to discriminate between life forms. "It would still apply to human embryos — they're not considered persons."

In this uncharted legal territory "there's all sorts of unknowns," says Clemenger. "We suggested the court take caution. There's a whole myriad of consequences of this situation."

Clemenger expects the Supreme Court won't issue a response for about six months. He believes that Supreme Court is "not the best place to balance interests." Instead, Parliament should address this issue.

Patenting humans

On May 21, lawyer Bill Sammon spoke out to the Supreme Court on behalf of EFC and CCC. His presentation mentioned several key points.

"It is impossible to consider the serious issues involved in this appeal without considering the broader issues surrounding genetic engineering. As there is nothing in the Patent Act which prevents patenting the human body, it is an open question whether modified human body parts that have been isolated from the body and genetically altered can be subject to a patent, just like DNA, RNA, genes and proteins. The suggestion that any aspect of the human body might be patentable has raised strong opposition within Parliament."

"Up until the Federal Court of Appeal decision in this case, patents were not extended to higher life forms as they were not considered patentable subject matter. Because the legislature of the day could not have anticipated extending the concept of invention to higher life forms, the wording of the definition of invention contained in the Patent Act, which is rooted in 19th century terminology, does not assist very much in determining whether higher life forms are patentable subject matter."

"This Court should proceed with caution when considering whether to extend patent protection to higher life forms. In proceeding cautiously, this court should be guided by the ethical and moral issues directly implicated in



COURTESY EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP OF CANADA

Bruce Clemenger, director of EFC's Centre for Faith and Public Life

patenting of higher life forms.

"The strongest argument in favor of patent rights is strictly utilitarian — that without such rights, research and creativity would be stifled as it would not be profitable. This rationale has been justly criticized on the basis there may be better ways of increasing availability and use either by modifying or finding alternative means such as grants, subsidies and tax concessions."

"Environmental risks include genetically modified animals escaping into the wild and upsetting the natural balance within a species which could have an unpredictable domino effect."

"Contrary to promoting open research and development, granting patents may hamper research that could lead to beneficial discoveries because scientists may not be able to conduct research without infringing the patent rights of others. The exclusive patent rights could result in prohibitive costs for therapeutic applications of research and thereby lead to serious inequities of access to the benefits of research...."

Stewards, not owners

"In acknowledging the interdependence of the natural world, Christians believe human beings are stewards of the earth, not owners, and their task as human beings is to care for all that God has entrusted to them," asserts EFC in the document. "The ownership interest created by granting a patent is objectionable as applied to higher life forms because it creates rights in the patent holder, without any corresponding responsibility for the life and health of the animals, subject to the patent. In other words, it grants ownership over the altered species, but divorces the patent holder from any responsibility to the individual animal created under a patent licence, which must lead

See PATENTING p. 15...

Judgment could have troubling effects



Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

Last month the Ontario Superior Court issued an injunction which, if allowed to stand as precedent, could have troubling implications for the ability of faith-based institutions to uphold their distinctive identities. Seventeen-year-old Marc Hall was denied permission to attend with his boyfriend, Jean-Paul Dumond, the annual senior prom at Monsignor John Pereyma Catholic Secondary School in Oshawa, where Hall is a student. School authorities had argued that, because Catholic teachings prohibit homosexual behavior, allowing Hall and Dumond to attend as a couple would violate the school's integrity as a Catholic institution.

Mr. Justice Robert McKinnon disagreed and granted an injunction allowing the two youths to attend the prom. McKinnon argued in his ruling that the Catholic board's decision would do "serious and irreparable injury" to Hall, if allowed to stand. In this case, Hall's right to be free from discrimination must take priority over the school's right to maintain its religious standards. McKinnon further said that he could find nothing in Catholic teachings that holds same-sex dancing to be sinful, and that the church further preaches against discrimination.

Although McKinnon's injunction was simply meant to be that, and not a precedent-setting ruling to be applied across the board, the principles behind the injunction are likely to find their way into future rulings, assuming it is not struck down at a higher level in the meantime. Yet his arguments are far from unassailable and could be overturned.

Standards seen as oppression

To begin with, they represent an undue broadening of the notion of injury. In a society preoccupied with what Mary Ann Glendon has aptly labeled "rights talk," many have come to assume that any requirement that members of a community live up to certain standards is a manifestation of oppression, particularly if the standards at issue involve sex. Yet no one would charge a pro-homosexual rights organization with discrimination for failing to hire someone disagreeing with its agenda. Nor would many argue that a Jewish

synagogue does irreparable injury by excluding from the congregation believers in the divinity of Christ.

Even from within the predominant liberal framework, it simply makes sense that, if you voluntarily join an Orthodox Jewish community, you should expect to follow a kosher diet, observe the sabbath and wear certain types of clothing. If you decide not to do these, then you necessarily place yourself outside the community. Rather than claiming to have suffered injury, you would simply be advised to join a Conservative or Reform synagogue.

Presuming to judge Catholic doctrine

What further weakens McKinnon's reasoning is the little-recognized fact that he is presuming to judge what is and is not Catholic doctrine — something obviously exceeding the normative competence of a judicial body. If the injunction is allowed to stand, there is no telling where future courts will take this unwarranted power to define, in effect, a community's creed. It stretches the imagination to envision the Supreme Court of Canada combing through, say, the Heidelberg Catechism or the Belgic Confession to see whether a Reformed Christian university is allowed to require its faculty members to be faithful to their spouses, to refrain from extramarital intercourse, and to avoid practising abortion.

We must hope and pray that saner heads will prevail and that the courts will come to understand that a genuine public justice does not mean that individuals have the right to do as they please without incurring the disapproval of others. Rather it demands that political authorities protect a variety of communities and institutions, even when their confessional and ethical identities clash with the current, transitory prejudices of the larger culture.



David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario.

Editorial

On loving chickens and the Trinity

Harry der Nederlanden

It was good to listen to and rub shoulders with the highly committed men and women who participated in the Earthkeeping conference at Redeemer. You get new energy, inspiration and clarity from such people. We're the kind of creatures who do much better in community. Our columnists John Wood and Bert Hielema were also there in the thick of things.

It was also good to hear the main speakers root their thinking and their call for action in the nature of God. That's a solidly Calvinist thing to do. Coincidentally I happen to be reading a book on the Trinity by Juerger Moltmann. He's a Reformed theologian, perhaps not in the CRC tradition, but he's certainly a reforming theologian, always testing the tradition. Ears attuned by Moltmann, I was struck by the virtual absence in the speeches of such terms as kingship, kingdom, rule, sovereignty, cultural mandate – a cluster of terms with which we've become very familiar. When the speakers wished to root our reflection and action in God, they invariably said something like: "God loves his creation; therefore, so should we," or: "God declared all he made to be good; therefore, so should we."

A profound motive

That's convincing. Behind such statements we hear the biblical teaching that we are made in the image of God and that we are, therefore, called to image or imitate him. That provides a profound motive for treat-

ing not only one another but all God's creatures with care and respect, from rocks and trees, skies and seas, to racoons, rumbling whales and roaring lions.

As I sit here writing in Tim Horton's, just outside the window a couple of sparrows keep swooping down on the sidewalk to pick up beakfuls of dried grass for their nests. They seem to be beginners, for the stuff keeps falling back down and they keep picking it back up.

Harold Aardema, the former editor of the *Doon Press* was an unabashed bird lover. He and a retired principal from Sioux Center went about the northwest Iowa countryside putting up bird houses for purple martins and swallows. But in his back yard, he had a big cage. It was a sparrow trap. As I watched, he opened the cage, seized the trapped sparrows one by one and wrung their necks. To him sparrows were a pest. Their ability to live with humans and flourish enables them to multiply and displace other bird populations. They are a threat to biodiversity.

Harold loved birds by wringing the necks of sparrows. I couldn't do that. I love sparrows even more than dandelions. When you sit outside at the Tim Horton's in Port Dalhousie, the sparrows will join you at your table and peck away your donut crumbs. Actually, they prefer muffins; they are wise little creatures.

God loves the sparrows

I told Harold, "You know why there are so many sparrows?" I didn't pause to hear his answer because I knew it would be a long one. "Because God loves them," I quickly added. "He explicitly says so in the Bible."

But that didn't faze Harold; he's a bit of a closet heretic. Last time I dropped in, he was reading beetle-browed Nietzsche, who had no use for sparrows either. Much too humble. Nietzsche identified with the soaring eagle. By the way, did you know he went mad?

So, how do you love sparrows? For that matter, how do you love deer? How do you love wolves? How do you love the tiny grey bugs that infest your *boerekoel* every year, or those tiny mussels that are threatening to clog the Great Lakes?

I love chicken – to eat. When I was working my way through Dordt, my first job was with a chicken farmer. When I gathered the eggs, those feathered demons pecked at my hands, dove at my head and raised dust that ate right into the frontal lobes of my brain. I confess, I didn't love chickens. Still don't. Not a live one. Every time I crack an egg, I feel somewhat avenged. Am I supposed to love chickens – even when they aren't Kentucky fried?

As some weary parents found out long ago, love is not enough.

Language of kingship and sovereignty

The language of kingship and sovereignty used to make it easier to talk about how to love. A God who created the world with a certain structure, including those made for us, such as family church and state, was expected to enforce that good order because he ruled over it as king. God's word was law. The metaphors of kingship and rule were hardly figures of speech for a church that lived in a time of absolute monarchs. For hundreds of years, God was seen as the monarch of all monarchs; all the earthly kings derived their authority and rules for ruling from him. In fact, in the major political treatises of Reformation times, the monarch

was referred to as *christomimetes*, that is, a photocopy of Christ the Lord, but reduced in size.

Kingship of all believers

When those in the Reformed tradition spoke of imaging God, especially in the context of the cultural mandate ("Fill the earth and subdue it."), it was in similar terms. Luther's "priesthood of all believers" tended to become the kingship of all believers. Many theologians like Juerger Moltmann (and Sally MacFague) have devoted much effort to revise this authoritarian image of God. It is part of a broader effort to rid our theology of pagan Greek influences. But a good deal of the motive behind such revision has been the environmental movement (and feminism). The language of authority, domination and control associated with kingship, be it earthly or divine, deeply influences the way we relate to the world. Feminists think it encourages a patriarchal attitude among men.

We must admit that there is more than a smidgen of truth to this account of our traditional language about God. Traditional Reformed thinking began by trying to describe God's essence – divinity as it is in and of itself: free, complete in itself, absolute, omnipotent and transcendent, one in substance with three persons. Moltmann begins with God as he reveals himself to us in time and in Scripture, the covenant God. His being is revealed as love because as three persons he is from the beginning a social being who shares himself. His divinity is seen not first of all in his transcendent majesty but in the cross, where he suffers for us and makes himself one with us in our weakness. The emphasis on God as a community of persons who are equal and who share themselves with one another implies that when we image God we do so not in terms of sovereignty and obedience but in terms of co-operation and self-giving love.

Changing picture of God

Because of this changing picture of God, we are becoming reluctant to use the language of kingship and sovereignty. Is this necessary to make the cross central?

Although there is much we can learn from Moltmann, I think it's a mistake to avoid what is certainly one of the most prominent ways that Scripture speaks of God's relation to us. It is precisely by taking the pivotal figures of king and father and radically redefining them in the person of the servant-king that ruling and serving are brought together, that upholding justice is an act of love, and that exercising power becomes empowering to others. Very few of our forebears ever thought that the way to propagate the kingdom and promote the Christian life is by bullying people. They did, however, believe that renewal comes when we yield our autonomy and power to the authority and rule of our Lord and King.

God's love overcomes all because, through the cross, Jesus has become Lord, who has defeated the principalities and powers aligned against us. The message of God's sovereignty is no less important in our struggle to image God in our restoration and healing of creation as a whole than in shaping the rest of our culture. Let's not be shy about proclaiming that Jesus is Lord!

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Opinion/Letters

Edmonton teacher warns against alliances with public schools

Re: "strike is a bump on the road of publicly funded Christian Schools" March 11, 2002 and "Ontario government publishes education tax credit guidelines."

I was saddened to see the Edmonton Christian Schools get caught up in Canadian trade unionism's cudgel tactics when it comes to labor relations. But this situation was in no way unforeseen by those who follow Canadian labor dynamics, and this scenario had likely been pointed out to many of the parties involved in the decision to join the publicly funded alternative education program of the Edmonton public school board.

The worst did happen

Yes, the worst did happen and the end of the labor dispute will not resolve many other untenable areas of concern for Christians who would ally themselves, firstly, with the public sector and, secondly, with the secular trade union movement.

There are no friends to Christians in the secular trade unions and those who support them politically. When employee/management interactions are reduced to an adversarial relationship, it precludes any concept of community. The Christian school community deserves more than this.

The Alberta government has addressed the injustice of double taxation for parental choice in education by making tax dollars available to alternate school systems, but the price is to be organized by the 'sweetheart union' of the government. Do not think for one minute that the Alberta Teachers Association (ATA) did not lobby, pester, and threaten the government for compliance on the matter of compulsory employee membership, as this is the basis of their vast influence and power. The issue of who will be able to be hired by the alternate school systems will soon rear its ugly head again, and it will be not long before curriculum will be subject to the entropic forces of conformity, political correctness and the general intellectual sloth that passes for contemporary Western public educational culture.

Shuddering in disbelief

Western democracies usually do not have the strength of resolve necessary to adhere to sound philosophical or spiritual principles to guide decisions and actions. They more commonly opt for choosing courses of action that assuage the largest and loudest sectors of their electorate. Therefore, the possibility of having an autonomous Christian community controlling the education of their children under the umbrella of secular school system is highly unlikely.

As for the ATA, just the very thought of any alliance with this organization — when

alternatives could have easily been found — makes me shudder in disbelief. Secular teachers unions, in general, demand compliance from their membership, usually through intimidation, fines and withholding of service. There is no room for alternative educational constructs that do not meet the very crude, exclusive, and poorly thought-out philosophies of the Canadian trade labor movement.

The irony is that teachers, who enjoy the benefits of lengthy schooling, choose a trade union model for organization and not that of a professional organization. It is assumed that teachers in the public system will engender an atmosphere of co-operation and dialogue in their classes, but not in the case of negotiations with an employer, an employer that, by the way, is held accountable to an electorate who will relieve them of their management duties if they fail to live up to them. This of course is not true for the leadership of most secular trade unions, who give the outward signs of being democratic but are at heart Marxists. In the political arena, they do not trust the membership to vote appropriately, so undue pressure to back anointed candidates is exerted.

A stroke of genius

I don't mean to single out the ATA and the Alberta provincial government, because all this is true for most educational labor relations in Canada. The situation in Ontario is similar — except that there is light on the horizon. The stakes in Ontario are much higher because of the sheer size of the education system and the wealth and power of the Ontario Teachers Federation (OTF). The tax credit system is a stroke of genius for the current regime in Ontario because it does not require any structural re-organization as in Edmonton.

The money stays with the parents and it effectively cuts out any meddling from the OTF. Ontario Christian schools need only comply with government curriculum standards to be accredited and their school boards remain autonomous and parent-directed. The OTF spin on this, of course, is that the granting of the tax credit removes money from the public school system (This, of course, is patently wrong). Somehow they conclude that a 'per student' funding formula (which is increasing) is affected by students who are not even in the system. Actually parents who choose to put their children in an alternate school system will not be paying a full double education tax but will be reduced to a one-and-a-half times tax. This is not complicated. The students in the public school where I teach can't understand why this government wouldn't have complied with the UN directive to eliminate this injustice and why has Ontario, Canada's richest province, not done this earlier?

Students suffered from strikes

The labor relations atmosphere in which I operate does not lend itself to my discussing these issues openly and honestly. My school is known as a particularly militant union stronghold, and I would suffer the consequences of holding a divergent view. In the past five years, students in the public system

have suffered through four work stoppages, and for the life of me I can't remember any of the issues, not that they would have been objectively explained to the membership. I do know the students have lost a lot of their school time and I feel sorry for them.

I do not willingly participate in any union activity at all because instead of being an entity concerned with my well-being and the atmosphere of learning for my students, the union is a political mouthpiece for a very vocal and radical minority. I also resent being compelled to be member of a corrupt, inept, duplicitous, and undemocratic organization. I have been lessened as a human being by my association with this organization and have been treated accordingly.

Beginning of a very sorry trend

So, "a bump in the road"? Not on your life! This will be the beginning of a very sorry trend which over time will be shown to be the antithesis of Christian education. I have lived in Edmonton and know very many people there who either send or have sent their children to the schools of that society or who teach or have taught in those schools, and I have had the highest regard for the way the society had been organized prior to the alliance with the Edmonton Public School Board.

The financial commitment to send children to an alternate non-public-funded system is overwhelming. I know the kind of exhaustion a school community experiences, and the lure of financial relief is great. But I know the public system thoroughly as a teacher, an administrator, a curriculum developer, and as a program consultant, and I have yet to see anywhere in this country's largest, richest school board the care and compassion, depth of curriculum and pedagogy, and love for children that is daily given to them by their teachers in the Christian schools.

I also know the public system as a parent whose children were in that system. And it

became very clear to me, and many of my colleagues in the public system, that we could no longer send our children to a school system that makes a point of providing no spiritual education. My apprehension became acute as our children neared secondary school age.

Public schools have 'aggressively anti-Christian atmosphere'

Many of my Christian peers chose the secular system citing the programs and facilities that are available in that system. I could only see the context in which these programs are delivered. In high school, children begin abstract, critical thought, and if the context is secular, all program and facilities concerns are meaningless. Curriculum, social interaction and the onset of puberty during these years is overwhelming for most children, and if we also ask them to maintain their faith in the aggressively anti-Christian atmosphere the public schools have become, we ask far too much.

I will fight for the autonomy of our schools; I will fight for justice in taxation. The reasons are obvious, of course, and apparent to those for whom schooling is more than just the transfer of information to upcoming generations. When our parents and grandparents started our schools, the public system was not as bad an option as it is now.

It is my sincere hope that the Edmonton Christian schools can maintain their unique calling to present the Christian witness to their children through their schools, and it is also my sincere hope that justice in labor relations will prevail and the yoke of a monolithic, oppressive union structure can be lifted. We have a precious jewel in the crown of Christendom with our school systems, and if we take on the face of the public systems, it is to the detriment of our children.

The writer, a teacher in Edmonton, wishes to remain anonymous.

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Ecology/Education

Earth is a gift to be valued

Lisa M. Petsche

The day Paula Gonzalez saw the first photo of Earth taken by orbiting astronauts, she became a global missionary. "I saw a new vision of our planet, as a small, finite place." It was the start of a spiritual transformation.

Ever since, she's been educating people of all ages about the critical state of our planet and teaching them how to live lighter on Earth. She participated in the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and has led passive solar building projects — including creation of a learning centre known as EarthConnection — to illustrate life-sustaining alternatives to predominant energy sources.

Plug into the sun

Recently, the vibrant, 69-year-old Sister of Charity and former biology teacher from Cincinnati was in the Hamilton, Ont., area giving workshops titled "Plug into the Sun." She came equipped with overheads, videotapes, magazines, photo albums and an assortment of solar-powered items, including a cooking kit.

Gonzalez described the ecological footprint, a powerful tool that measures the amount of biologically productive land and sea area needed to produce the resources we use and absorb the wastes we produce. It's used at an individual, community, national and global level to gauge the sustainability of our lifestyles.

Take the personal Ecological Footprint Quiz at www.earthday.net/footprint.stm and prepare to be shocked. The conservative global average is 1.7 hectares per capita, but only 1.5 are actually available, she said, confirming that current consumption exceeds Earth's regenerative capacity.

Big national footprints

The United States has the biggest national footprint, an astounding 5.5 hectares per person, while Canada comes in at 4.3. (If everyone lived as North Americans do, it would take several planets to support humanity.) Contrast this with India's footprint — a mere 0.4 hectares per capita. Alarmingly, one-quarter of Earth's population (the most affluent) is responsible for three-quarters of global consumption.

Gonzalez made frequent reference to the Earth Charter, a set of global principles, values and objectives arising out of years of international dialogue and officially launched in June 2000. It aims to guide individuals, businesses, governments and international institutions "to help build a sustainable world based on respect for nature,

universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace." Global interdependence and universal responsibility are key concepts. (The seven-page document can be viewed at and downloaded from: www.earthcharter.org.)

Sacred community, sacred treasures

Contrary to how we've been living for a long time, humans are not rulers, separate and above Earth, but rather an integral part of it, like other living creatures, Gonzalez said. We need to reconnect with nature, developing a spirit of kinship with all life.

Gonzalez referred to Earth as a sacred community and its natural resources as sacred treasures. Miraculously, it contains everything we need to live in abundance, provided that we respect its regenerative life cycles and mirror them in our human systems.

"When it comes to natural resources, we've maxed out our credit cards," Gonzalez warned.

Yet she remains hopeful that Earth will heal, given its resilience and the fact that we already have the knowledge and technology to dramatically reduce our ecological footprint and provide for all of Earth's inhabitants.

What's lacking is the will.

Fundamental changes needed

Fundamental changes in our attitudes and behavior are required. Value-wise, this means placing life — people and the rest of nature — ahead of money, possessions and status. Gonzalez pointed to each person's uniqueness and giftedness in the eyes of God as the ultimate status symbol. "What more affirmation do we need?"

We also must recognize that our individual lifestyle choices, including housing, transportation, food, and energy and water consumption, have a significant impact on the ecological footprint. (If you switch from an average-size car to a sport utility vehicle for one year, you waste more energy than if you were to keep your refrigerator door open for six years or your television on for 28 years.)

Gonzalez challenged us to be more honest about distinguishing our wants from our needs, and to resist manipulation by the advertising that bombards us at every turn. "Living beyond our means is a form of slavery," she said frankly.

Outlandishly excessive

It's also outlandishly excessive. For example, we live in oversized houses full of possessions we don't have time to enjoy, and we drive

Leaving the village, keeping the faith

We all grew up in a village. That is to say, all that we knew as a child was our family and the community to which that family was attached. For most of us, this is a relatively small social group, made up of mostly the same type of people. They might have been all from the same religion, the same ethnicity, and the same general income level. If we were lucky, it was rather stable and loving, and nurtured within us a character that equipped us for life.

Some young people are gearing up for public higher education this fall, and I think it's fair to tell them going to public university can be like leaving the village for the city. On your own. First of all, the location is probably unfamiliar, so you find a map and learn to use the public transportation system. Secondly, your classes are full of *all kinds of different people*. You sang about them long ago: red and yellow, black and white. They have many different perspectives on life, most of which you might have been told at some point were wrong, false, or just plain "wacko." Now they sit beside you, just as lost as yourself, and they might even give you a friendly, sympathetic smile.

I remember when I was introduced to my graduate class at Queens. We had a Unitarian, a self-proclaimed "Marxist Nihilist," numerous lesbians and one gay student, a handful of feminists, and me, the Dutch Calvinist who happened to have voted *Reform* that year. Welcome to the "Big City."

Coping in the 'Big City'

I now journey with numerous students at a time who take four years to adjust to this new environment. Some are better equipped than others. Coming from the Christian school system may make it more difficult, but it seems to be most difficult for those from radically conservative communities. Like the Pentecostal who was told true Christians speak in tongues, or the Brethren who was warned not to lose his soul to the devil while "book learning," or the Reformed student who was told his church was the only one which had the Whole Truth. Experience soon clashes with these declarations, and the mental anguish that results can be excruciating.

Students cope in different ways, and adjustment comes through sweat and tears.

"I don't want to turn my back on my past," says one student. "They were really good people, in a way. They were just doing what they thought God was telling them to do. I see how lost some people are here, and I don't want any part of that."

everywhere in gas-guzzling vehicles.

Think of Earth's resources as life support systems, Gonzalez urged, and practice CPR — conservation, preservation and reservation. The time to act is now, and each of us can make a difference.

We can choose to eat lower on the food chain; rely more on mass transit, bicycling and walking for transport; buy less; repair rather than replace; buy secondhand;

avoid heavily packaged goods; recycle; and compost. We can educate ourselves about alternative energy sources, such as solar and wind power, and support their development and use. And we can demand ecological accountability from businesses and fair and eco-friendly policies from all levels of government.

Clearly the days of our individualistic, materialistic, throwaway society are numbered. "We're in the midst of an environmental

Campus Culture

Peter Schuurman



"I can't stand going back," says another. "I'm so glad to be out of there. Out of the single-mindedness, away from the assumption that our ways are God's only ways, and the attitude that the 'We-Alone-Are-God's-Gift-To-The-World.' It hurts me now to hear all their prejudices. It pains me to hear all the petty doctrinal fights."

What I usually tell students is that leaving the village certainly stretches the heart. The cliché holds true: you can take yourself out of the village, but you can't take the village out of you. We need to learn to love the best of our past and forgive the rest. To love and forgive our village, is to love and forgive ourselves. We don't need to worry about the path ahead: our faith grows with us, just as God's Spirit goes with us, wherever we are. He is well-traveled, and can be found in any city, if we are attentive.

Finding a village within the city

The city is not better than the village, but neither is it more dangerous. The devil wears wooden shoes in the public school, but in the Christian setting he wears slippers, I'm told. Your soul can wither and your heart can become cold and callous in either place. Faith can be lost in a small town church split as well as in a third year class on evolution. "The only safe place for us is where God calls us to be, and even then, there are spirits to wrestle."

Don't get me wrong: the tension we experience when around those with a different lifestyle never abates. We need a village-like community to continue to nurture our faith, and help us raise our children, and become the vehicle through which we can serve the needs of the world. We immerse ourselves in pluralistic settings in order to learn — learn about ourselves and the world we are called to love.

One thing is for sure, though: to listen and dialogue with people different from yourself can be a rich experience, if you have a good grounding in who you are. This stretching makes us stronger, and opens our hearts wider. Know your own village, and every city can be your home. Nurture your faith personally, find a community to celebrate it, and you will see God everywhere. Come to the university!



Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed campus chaplain at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ont.

revolution that's comparable to the agricultural and industrial revolutions," Gonzalez asserted.

To quote the Earth Charter, all life will be strengthened when we learn to "live with reverence for the mystery of being, gratitude for the gift of life, and humility regarding the human place in nature."

Lisa M. Petsche is a freelance writer in Stoney Creek, Ont.

Church

Study shines spotlight on megachurches

Janet Chismar (Religion Today)

"All megachurches are not carbon copies of Willow Creek Community Church, Calvary Chapel, Saddleback Church or even First Baptist of Dallas," says Scott Thumma, faculty associate at Hartford Seminary's Institute for Religion Research (HIRR). "And the distinctions between churches may be as important as the similarities."

Thumma's research is part of a sweeping study, called Faith Communities Today (FACT). His work is based on an extensive questionnaire that was sent to 600 very large congregations. According to Thumma, "The primary finding from this study is that megachurches have many common characteristics but that there are important differences with the group."

At its most basic descriptive level, a "megachurch" is defined as a congregation that has 2,000 or more worship attendees in a week.

17,000 churchgoers

Willow Creek Community Church, in South Barrington, Ill., is perhaps one of the most well known. Founded 25 years ago in a cinema, it quickly outgrew the premises, despite running three services every Sunday. Around 17,000 attend services during the weekend. The church's 90 meeting



WILLOW CREEK COMMUNITY CHURCH PHOTO

Bill Hybels, pastor of Willow Creek Community Church.

rooms host 400 events a week.

Thumma's analysis focused on large Protestant congregations where average weekly attendance last year was 3,857. However, size alone is an insufficient characterization of this distinctive religious reality, research found.

"The megachurch is a new structural and spiritual organization unlike any other," says Thumma. "In order to understand fully the dynamics of megachurches, they must be seen as a collective social phenomenon

rather than as individual instances of spectacular growth."

Phenomenon of suburbs

The FACT study shows that the rapid development of these large congregations took place during the last two decades. Attendance during that period shot up at an average rate of 90 per cent. The research indicates that the megachurches are a phenomenon of the suburbs of very large cities. Nearly two-thirds are located in or around cities of 250,000 or more.

Despite their size, nearly half of the megachurches described themselves as a "close-knit family." Thumma reported that nearly all of the large churches have small fellowship groups and that fully half had an intentional strategy of utilizing the more intimate small group structures.

Megachurches are located everywhere in the United States, but they do have areas of concentration. Nearly 72 per cent are found in a swath from Georgia and Florida across Texas to California. Fewer of these very large congregations are located in New England (a mere two per cent) than in any other part of the nation.

When asked to describe the theological character of the megachurches, 48 per cent of the

respondents characterized the congregations as "evangelical." Another 14 per cent were described as "charismatic" while only two per cent used the term "fundamentalist." A sizable minority falls within the moderate and mainline denominations, Thumma adds.

Reliance on Bible, but not creeds

Megachurches place high reliance on the authority of the Bible (88 per cent) and very small importance on historic creeds, doctrine or tradition (eight per cent). Sixty per cent of the congregations always include an altar call in the service of worship.

These congregations are not blind to the world's or their local community's needs, according to the study. The congregations are very active in social ministry areas, targeted both at its membership and also those outside its walls. These efforts are more likely accomplished through their own congregational efforts, rather than in conjunction with other churches or external ministry and mission organizations.

Likewise, this data points to the somewhat tenuous relationship megachurches have with their affiliate denominations, Thumma says. They seem considerably less in-

volved with their denominational structures, less dependent on its resources and less likely to interact in joint projects with churches from their own denominations than from churches outside their affiliate religious organizations.

Ray Pritchard, pastor of Calvary Memorial Church in Oak Park, Ill., talked with Religion Today about the challenges of pastoring a large church. "It's very easy in a larger church for people to get lost," says Pritchard. "In fact, our church is a great place to come if you want to just get lost. We have three services and we move people in and out quickly. We have 60-70 different ministries that people can get involved in. It's easy to lose track of individual faces. We tell people, 'If you want to come and stay anonymous, you can. We won't even know you're there. We're glad you're there. But if you don't tell us your name, we're not going to know.'"

Many specialized programs

So, to make the large church a bit more personal, they set up a whole system of overlapping ministries — small groups, 12-step groups, Sunday school classes, and ministry teams.

"Today, people's needs are so different that we're specializing a lot more than churches used to 20 or 30 years ago," says Pritchard. "You've got to have parents' groups, single moms, single dads, divorce recovery, remarried groups, and grandparents' groups."

Canada, unlike the United States, has very few megachurches. One of them is Springs Church in Winnipeg, Manitoba — one of the largest and fastest growing churches in the entire country.

Church attendance at Springs Church has consistently increased by about 50 per cent each year since 1994 when Leon and Sally Fontaine took over. Now, getting people in and out of the church parking lot between Sunday morning services is a job requiring help from the Winnipeg city police and volunteers to direct traffic. More than 5,000 people call Springs Church their home.

Large churches are often seen as impersonal, where many hurting people fall through the cracks, but according to Fontaine, that's not the case at the Springs Church. "We present to people on a regular basis all of the multiple small services that go on for parents and singles, and for marriages and counseling, and so anybody can access any kind of help they want, any time they want."

Purpose-driven church conference focuses on method

Mark Ellis, Senior Correspondent, ASSIST News Service

LAKE FOREST, Calif. (ANS) — Several thousand church leaders swarmed the spacious grounds of the Saddleback Church mega-campus recently, seeking to replicate the potent formula for church health and success popularized by Saddleback's Pastor Rick Warren.

"The church here is so famous because of church growth," said Pastor Michael Chua, of the Makati Gospel Church in the Philippines. "I want to learn how they were able to do this." Pastor Chua found out about the conference overseas and enrolled over the Internet, as did church leaders from 34 other countries.

Pastors streamed into the modernistic hall with its aluminum roof and exposed ceiling ducts painted in designer colors. Many left behind much smaller and more traditional churches throughout America, but a glint of expectancy filled their eyes as they dared to consider their own churches transformed by the purpose-driven model. A 50-voice choir and 10-piece band added to the spirit of excitement and celebration as Pastor Rick

Warren ambled onto the stage.

"The bottom line is to produce changed lives," Pastor Warren said, with a genial and unaffected quality that belies the fact that he is the organizational genius behind one of the largest and fastest-growing congregations in America. Some 22,000 church leaders have attended his seminars and more than 60,000 pastors worldwide subscribe to his free, weekly e-mail newsletter: Rick Warren's Ministry Toolbox.

"We want every life to be purpose-driven," Warren said. "We want to help people live the life God intended." His introductory remarks were brief, then his choir broke in singing "Lives are changing, lives are changing.... We're united in thought, united in purpose," as video images on three jumbo screens above displayed the smiling congregation at Saddleback engaged in various church events — from weddings to beach baptisms.

Addicted to changing lives

The videos are reminiscent of Pepsi commercials from the '60s, except the smiling faces are not



SADDEBACK CHURCH PHOTO

Saddleback Church's Pastor Rick Warren

dancing in the sand with soda bottles, but filled with newness of life after a baptismal dipping in the Pacific Ocean. More than 8,000 were baptized last year at Saddleback, a figure Warren related with satisfaction.

"I am addicted to changed lives," Warren said. "My basic message is repentance, but I rarely use the term," he said. "We are in the mind-changing business. Behind every sin is a lie

you're believing."

In Warren's opening remarks he spoke often of God and his purpose for our lives. "You were made by God and for God," he said. "God has never created anything without a purpose. You have to decide if you will live for temporary pleasures or God's eternal purposes."

After a few more remarks, the praise band broke in again singing "You've gotta have meaning... There's a life to be risen in everyone, Come alive, Come alive!" The song that aroused the greatest response from the assembled pastors was Matt Redmond's "The Heart of Worship." Instead of just watching the praise band perform, the pastors actually joined in the worship themselves, singing "It's all about you, Jesus," with heartfelt enthusiasm.

Warren's preview introduction to "The Purpose-Driven Life" was frequently punctuated with scripture references — more than 90 citations primarily from modern paraphrases of the Bible.

Cultural relevance is an important part of the mix here, evidenced by Warren's casual dress, paying

See SADDLEBACK page 8...

Church

Saddleback pastor tries to be culturally relevant

... continued from page 7

homage to the surf culture surrounding the giant church. He's serious about reaching the minds and hearts of unbelievers in South Orange County, and will defy preconceived ideas about how to conduct his services if he finds methods that work with greater effectiveness.

How-to manual

His book, *The Purpose Driven Church*, was given away to attendees. It has become a how-to manual for admirers of his pragmatic approach and has now been translated into 21 languages. In the book, he defines success as fulfilling the Great Commission. "Ministry must be both faithful and fruitful," he writes, identifying numerical growth of the church as important evidence of fruit. Warren criticizes those "communicating in an outdated style" that doesn't produce any fruit, especially those in the church still "perpetuating the culture of the 1950s."

Pastors were eager to lap up the message. "Everything we do, we ask, 'What would an unchurched person think about what we're doing?'" said Richard Sundermeyer,

pastor of the Family Life Church of the Nazarene.

While Warren maintains pastors can't allow the unchurched to "drive the total agenda of the church," the "needs, hurts, and interests of seekers" should be a top priority in planning services.

Pastor Sundermeyer is responsible for a four-year old church plant using the purpose-driven model. Sundermeyer denied the seeker-sensitive approach waters down the gospel. "It's still the same message," he said. "We just say it in terms they understand."

Can't do business the same way

"We can't do business the same way we've always done it," said Jimmy Ezell, pastor of the North Baptist Church in Wilmington, Delaware. "Our church has a hundred years of legacy, but the neighborhood has changed," Ezell said. "We're in the process of transitioning to a purpose-driven model so I came here to get it straight from the horse's mouth," he said.

Pastor Ezell replaced the pipe organ with a praise band and initiated more small-group activities.

"Our Wednesday night meeting has a coffee house feel to it, and it's more discussion-oriented," Ezell's sermons now employ Powerpoint, with visual illustrations and other dramatic effects. "The seniors in our church have graciously given their energy to the same vision."

"The outside of our church looks traditional, but when you come inside there's a whole new feeling of relevance," Ezell said. The purpose-driven formula "gives a life and energy to the service that wasn't there four years ago," he said.

The pastors conference in Lake Forest drew 3,800 church leaders from remarkably diverse backgrounds — more than 93 different denominations. The mass convergence of beliefs seems to imply that methodology is the valued commodity here, and that doctrinal purity is much less consequential.

"We're not talking about doctrine," said Doug Slaybaugh, one of four executive pastors at Saddleback. "We're talking about how to do church in a way that meets people where their needs are," he said. "We unapologetically preach the gospel, but we try to do that in ways that are clear, relevant, and not confusing."

The motivation for Warren's

softening of evangelical language is clarity, Slaybaugh believes. "The motives are, 'How can I say it in a way that people understand it and receive it,'" he said. "He would probably not use the term born-again. He would probably talk about making God the CEO or boss of your life, putting him in charge."

It is a remarkable thing to see Baptists and Episcopalians sitting side by side, soaking in Warren's teachings. "Our diocese is just getting the word on this," said David Price, rector of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Houston, Texas. "The bishop has taken a keen interest in recent months and has begun to push it," he said. "This year, there are five Episcopal churches from Houston here."

Rector Price says he had to rewrite Warren's basic courses (Classes 101-501), "to reflect a different vocabulary." For example, when Warren speaks of "reaching the lost," Price speaks of "reaching out to people who haven't heard of God's love." Price admitted that Warren has already "done a lot of softening of the language of evangelical churches."

Because Price doesn't hear conversion language in the Episcopal Church, he said he "de-emphasized

the conversion of life emphasis. Now I seriously emphasize people waking up to their own salvation. People either remember a (salvation) moment or they don't. At any moment you can turn to him and make him the centre of your being."


No altar calls

Saddleback church doesn't use altar calls or ask people to publicly acknowledge receiving Christ in the service, but makes use of response cards and phone follow-up, in which trained volunteers lead seekers through the sinner's prayer, according to Pastor Slaybaugh. There are other opportunities to receive Christ in their introductory classes.

In Warren's preaching seminar, he explained the overriding purpose of his speaking is to make people more like Jesus Christ. "To be like Christ is to think like Jesus Christ and to feel like Jesus Christ and to act like Jesus Christ," he said. "I have failed as a preacher if people aren't becoming more like Jesus Christ."

Mark Ellis is a Senior Correspondent for ASSIST News Service. He is also an assistant pastor in Laguna Beach, CA.

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MCC thrift shop movement looks to future

COALDALE, Alta. (MCC) — Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) thrift store workers from across Canada recently marked the 30th anniversary of the MCC thrift store movement by paying tribute to past accomplishments, and looking to the future.

An estimated 150 volunteers, managers and board members met in Coaldale on April 25 and 26 for the national Thrift Workshop, held every four years. The last one was held in Abbotsford, B.C. in 1998.

"We wanted to demonstrate respect for the past accomplishments of this grass-roots movement, while equipping present workers with the necessary tools to compete in a second-hand marketplace that has many new non-profit and for-profit entries," explained Judy Dyck, MCC Canada's national thrift store co-ordinator.

It was 30 years ago that a group of women in Altona, Man., developed a creative use for surplus clothing MCC had accumulated when shipments to developing countries were declining because of high shipping costs. Four women who were on the planning team for the first thrift shop attended the anniversary meeting in Coaldale. They received a standing



DAVID MOLL/MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Judy Dyck, MCC Canada's national thrift store co-ordinator.

ovation from conference attendees for the faithfulness they have shown to the work of the thrift shop.

New visual identity

Meanwhile, a new, exclusive program of "branding identity" was launched at this workshop. A stylized shopping bag around the MCC logo will become the new visual identity for MCC Thrift Shops in North America. The logo will be used in all aspects of store operation including outdoor and indoor

signs, shopping bags, letterhead, business cards and advertising.

"The need to provide consistent qualities of friendliness and value, in addition to neat, attractive venues were emphasized to participants as a way of building the network's positive identity in the second-hand marketplace," said Dyck. The logo is currently in a trademark process on both sides of the border.

The 54 thrift stores in Canada forwarded \$4.2 million in contributions to MCC this past year.

Church/Agriculture

Don't idolize nature, church report tells supporters of organic farming

Cedric Pulford

LONDON, England (ENI) — Supporters of organic farming, who see it as the environmentally friendly way to produce food, have been warned against treating nature "as quasi-divine".

The admonition was given in a report on intensive farming by the Church of Scotland's Science, Religion and Technology (SRT) Project, which described as "neo-pagan" the attitude that nature was "not to be tampered with lest 'she' strike us back".

Questionable worldview

Such a worldview was just as questionable as its opposite, the promotion of scientific rationality as an "idol".

The report was accepted by the Church of Scotland's general assembly in Edinburgh on May 30. The report affirmed the importance of organic production for sustainable agriculture, but also backed the "integrated" approach, which was seen as a compromise between intensive agricultural practices and organic farming.

Integrated farming balances a concern for protecting the environ-

ment with the use of some technology, including some pesticide use, and genetically modified organisms "under the right circumstances".

"Organic should not be seen as necessarily more ethical than any integrated method of farming," the report said. "Both [integrated and organic agriculture] reflect a desire to do things better, reacting to the over-technologization of food production."

Organic farming eschews synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, and seeks to balance crop production with the ability of the soil to release nutrients. But although organic food is often seen as more healthful, "there is little evidence one way or the other for the claim".

The report pointed out that organic farming did not in itself guarantee the production of "pure" crops. Regulatory bodies have been questioning the safety of micro-organisms in the manure used as a crop nutrient.

In addition to some safety questions, organic farming had not yet proved it could be productive enough to meet large-scale food demands, Donald Bruce, director

of the SRT Project, told ENI.

Today, organic food represents only a tiny amount of the United Kingdom's agriculture production. But supporters wish to see it increase to 30 per cent of agricultural output by 2010 — which some see as unrealistic.

"In the longer term, if the will is there I wouldn't say it's not feasible," Bruce told ENI. "It is harder to obtain a high predictable yield of good quality using organic systems, but yields might go up. A recent comparative U.S. study of intensive, integrated and organic apple production showed that encouraging yields are possible."

Bruce called attention to certain paradoxes in the organic position. For example, although the environmental movement favors local production, which requires less transportation and is therefore easier on the environment, large quantities of organic food are being imported to meet consumer demand.

Supermarkets were geared to continuous supply even when produce was out of season in the home country.

"There is a substantial question

mark against the idea [of continuous supply]," Bruce commented. "We must be more aware of the effect of buying policies. On the

other hand, an absolute 'no' to imported produce would harm Third World growers."

Bishops label Dutch government 'anti-religious'

Andreas Havinga

Amsterdam (ENI) — Dutch Roman Catholic bishops have denounced the country's outgoing centre-left government for being "anti-religious" and have called for a closer relationship between the churches and the new government.

In a letter made public this month, the Catholic bishops listed a number of recent controversial social issues on which they opposed the government, from euthanasia to same-sex marriage. Last year, the Netherlands allowed marriages between partners of the same sex and this year gave the go-ahead to euthanasia in some cases.

The bishops' letter was addressed to Piet Hein Donner, the person charged by Queen Beatrix to lead negotiations between political parties to form a new coalition government, which could, on past experience, take weeks or months.

In the recent general election, the outgoing centre-left coalition suffered a stinging defeat at the hands of the Christian Democrats and Pim Fortuyn's List, a newly-founded anti-establishment party.

The bishops' conference said the outgoing government had "seriously underestimated the importance of religion for society." They enlarged their criticism to encompass earlier governments, writing of "the spiritual devastation" that governments of recent decades had "wreaked on society".

The bishops listed several

matters which they suggested were contrary to the values of the Roman Catholic Church, mentioning plans to allow certain forms of embryo research in addition to euthanasia and same-sex marriages.

Referring to public calls for tighter immigration controls, they added: "Asylum-seekers who for reasons of war or political persecution have left [their] home should be freely admitted into our country." Government policy needs to aspire to more than just "reducing financial shortfalls and fulfilling material needs. More is needed than [merely] striving for the greatest possible welfare."

The bishops also called for regular consultations between the government and the country's churches. Such meetings, they said, could help address the current social climate of the Netherlands, where "attention needs to be given to the quality of life and to good citizenship."

In a separate letter to Donner, the Council of Churches in the Netherlands — which includes the country's main Protestant churches as well as the Roman Catholic Church — called for a "clear recognition by the government of the contributions of religious organizations to society."

The council said it hoped for discussions with cabinet ministers about ways in which the government and the churches could work together to tackle social problems.

Praying for rainbows

Elbert van Donkersgoed

Shortly after Easter, some Christian faith communities celebrate Rogation. Rogation started in the sixth century as a time of prayer, appreciation and recognition of our dependence upon the land, on God's creation and the miracle of fresh growth and new birth. In many communities, this Rogation celebration has become a prayer service to bless new beginnings, not just for those involved with food-farmer, trucker, factory worker and cook, but the whole economy.

One of my favorite Bible characters is Noah, the hero of faith who built an ark, survived a 40-day deluge and was given a fresh start. God promised mankind no more massive floods and marked that promise by setting His rainbow in the clouds.

Rainbows that mark new beginnings

These spring celebrations of our faith are a time to pray for rainbows — rainbows that mark the promise of new beginnings.

I pray for a rainbow to mark the emergence of a new vision for agriculture; one that balances family life, food production, a great place to live, taking care of creation and community development; one that overcomes the profound undercurrent of disappointment among farmers about the long-term direction of Canadian agriculture.

I pray for a rainbow to mark our way to a partnership between urban development and countryside enhancement that restrains the market forces that have led to a loss of 52 per cent of our best soils in the Greater Toronto Area.

I pray for a rainbow to mark the return of ordinary weather, ordinary patterns of warm and cold,

rain and dry, so that farmers can put four years of weather stress behind us.

Hunger in a time of abundance

I pray for a rainbow to mark an answer to the paradox of hunger in a time of abundance. Canada, home of the world's cheapest food, is home to food banks in almost every community! And on any given day, TV media profiles starvation in Africa back-to-back with a report of Saskatchewan farmers going broke, bankrupted by low prices caused by surplus food production.

I pray for a rainbow to mark the return of humility as we extend the power of modern science to the smallest particles of life. I pray that transgenic modified seeds and cloned animals don't put even greater bounty in the hands of a few while the risks are left with the many, and with Creation.

I pray for a rainbow to mark the choices that lead to treading lightly on God's Creation — for tempering our enthusiasm for more possessions, greater knowledge, new possibilities.

Let's pray for rainbows in our celebrations of spring and the fresh start that spring always promises.



Elbert van Donkersgoed is the Strategic Policy Advisor of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, Canada. Corner Post can be heard weekly on CFCO Radio, Chatham and CKNX Radio, Wingham, Ontario. It is archived on the website of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario: www.christianfarmers.org.

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Education

Missed opportunities — Edmonton Christian Schools on strike

An open letter to the Edmonton Christian School Society Board and teachers

Co Vanderlaan

Dear Leaders of Christian Education:

Historical Background

Two years ago, we as Edmonton Christian School Society decided to become an alternative Christian School within the public system. That meant teachers were required to join the ATA (Alberta Teachers Association) and were bound by its Collective Agreement. The support staff and janitorial staff had to join other existing unions.

The public school board offered to either rent or buy the school facilities. The society decided to retain ownership and rented out its buildings to the Public School Board. The Christian School Society kept this escape hatch in case the relationship did not work out to the society's expectations.

Retaining a Reformed Christian perspective

Before the merger with Edmonton Public, many concerns were expressed at various meetings. Most of those focused on the freedom of our schools to determine curriculum and the right to teach from an integrated Reformed Christian perspective. Assurances were given that not only did we have that freedom but Edmonton Public insisted that we develop rules for retaining our vision in the way we taught our students.

The second concern was in the hiring of staff. Assurances on this matter were less clear in that it required looking at all applicants who professed to be Christian and who applied from within the public system. A determination would be based on qualifications and faith commitment. Authority for determining how an applicant's Christian world and life view fit with Edmonton Christian School's Mission and Vision Statements, however, was ultimately left to the interpretation of the Superintendent of public schools. In other words, it could be anyone as long as they professed to be Christian.

The third concern was teachers having to join the Alberta Teachers Association (ATA). Although there were concerns in the community, there were few concerns expressed by either the board or teachers. This is ironic considering the huge debate about Christian school teachers joining the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC) which took place over the

past number of years. One may ask if the Board's decision to join Edmonton Public and the teachers' motivation to join ATA were driven mainly by financial considerations. The community's concerns about potential strikes were addressed by the board in a letter styled in a question and answer format sent to the society membership dated June 26, 1998. The letter stated the following: "Would our teachers have to go on strike if the situation ever occurred? No, going on strike is an individual choice."

Into an adversarial confrontation

Here we are two years later. Edmonton Public school teachers entered a bitter two-and-a-half-week strike together with a number of other school districts throughout the province. Edmonton Christian School Board informed the parents of its students that the school would be closed for the duration of the strike and our teachers joined the strike. There were no real community discussions, no society meetings, and no attempt to deal with this major issue from a Christian perspective. We obediently followed the leadership of Edmonton Public and ATA into an adversarial confrontation without much regard for the impact on students and society but above all for what it means to be a Christian School in our secular society.

The events leading up to this two-and-a-half-week strike are now history. The Government has legislated the teachers (members of the ATA) back to work and has imposed a settlement via arbitration.

According to the ATA, the strike was about wages (they asked for a 20+ per cent increase), classroom size (too large and still increasing) and increased classroom time (an extra 25 minutes/day). Seemingly, no progress was made on any of the issues during the negotiations leading up to the strike or during the strike.

Community should have been consulted

Looking back, I believe we first and foremost failed to recognize that the Christian School(s) belong to the Christian community as a whole. Both board and teachers needed to consult the community to enter into a dialogue to search for a principled response to a very broken situation within a secular structure.

No doubt the teaching profession had "legitimate concerns.



"Edmonton Christian Schools, through its board and teachers could and should have been a shining light in the midst of this province-wide turmoil. This was our missed opportunity!"

Classroom sizes are indeed increasing and more is demanded of teachers in the name of fiscal responsibility. It is also true that the teaching profession is increasingly asked to pick up where modern families are falling down. The brokenness of family life has had a huge impact on the demands placed on all schools and their teachers. The issue here is how we as school board and teachers responded. Our Edmonton Christian teachers consistently stated that for them the issue was not wages but a matter of respect, classroom size, and classroom time. The missed opportunity was that we failed to develop a principled approach rooted in biblical thinking to the issues and instead we followed the ATA's agenda.

Focusing primarily on financial gain

The leadership of the ATA however, moved far away from the problem issues and focused primarily on financial gain. When the Alberta government issued a back to work order, the ATA went to court to fight the order. They won their case on technical grounds. The government responded by enacting legislation forcing teachers back and imposing arbitration and removed the teachers' right to strike for 18 months. In other words, the government imposed an 18-month contract.

Unfortunately, but predictably, both the government and the ATA focused on economics and therefore the arbitration process is again limited to monetary issues. In other

words, nothing has been resolved except students have lost almost three weeks of school and the animosity between teachers, school boards, government and the public has once again increased. These events prove once again that respect is not negotiated at a bargaining table, it is earned in an environment of mutual co-operation, problem solving and in the give and take of dealing with one another as image-bearers of God. Yet all of these important issues seem nothing more than utopian views in our secular, confrontational system.

An alternative response

Edmonton Christian Schools, through its board and teachers could and should have been a shining light in the midst of this province-wide turmoil. This was our missed opportunity! Should the Christian School Board not have recognized its responsibility as leaders of the larger Christian School support community? It could have led instead of followed. We knew long in advance that there was an impending strike. The community under the leadership of the board, had ample opportunity to pull together the expertise residing in the support community needed to draft a response that reflected a Christian approach to the relationship of the school society with its teachers and students.

We should have developed a policy that kept the schools open, encouraged parents to send their children and encouraged teachers to continue teaching. In so doing

we could also have developed clear responses to all of the issues giving rise to the strike. Edmonton Christian Schools would have provided leadership by addressing all the major concerns and giving its position on the issues to Edmonton Public. There is precedence for this even within the public system. Neerlandia School did so successfully many years ago. This approach would have allowed us together to develop a deeper and more meaningful working relationship with our staff. That, too, would have been an example within the public system.

The teachers together with the community could have developed their response as a work community. Unfortunately, we missed this opportunity by acting as 60 individuals with a few coming together here and there. Teachers could have developed a communal response stating their concerns and proposing to the society board that they communally work on those concerns to find solutions within the Edmonton Christian School society framework. With help from the community, the teachers could also have made a statement by deciding to continue to teach while urging the ATA to develop a better framework for dispute resolution and to develop alternatives to the current adversarial way of operating. Alberta law allows any and all employees to refuse to strike. Alberta's Labour Relations Code protects employees who go against the wishes of their union leadership from discrimination and repercussions.

Education/Agriculture/News

In summary, we missed a lot of opportunities. Did the Christian School Society Board fail our teachers, our students, and our support community by making decisions on its own and ignoring the fact that God places us in community with one another? After all, is this not a central principle underlying Christian education? Did the teachers fail our students and support community by taking an individualistic approach and by failing to demand that the Christian School Board fulfil its obligations? Did we as a school society fail both parties by our silence? Or have we together failed because we have allowed money to become determinative in the business of Christian education?

We could have been a beacon of hope for healthy change in Alberta by showing that there are real alternatives. By failing to create alternatives, Edmonton Christian Schools risk losing the respect of both its support community and of the public system.

Some alternatives

There are alternatives, however. We urge the Christian School Board to now begin a dialogue in its support community over what it means to be an alternative within the public system. What are we able to offer, and what alternatives can we develop, that will help break down the ongoing

adversarial relations that currently exist in our society? As teachers, we need to do the same. Together we need to discuss what it means to be a Christian work community, and how we can contribute in meaningful ways to the development of alternative methods within the ATA. We need to consult and support each other in this process.

This is not only the board and teachers' challenge, but I believe, also the expectation of the Christian School support community. In order to succeed, however, we all need to move from an economic model to a principled model of doing Christian education. Before we come to the wrong conclusions that economics is the real driving force determining the future of Christian education, we need to be reminded that Christian education is growing much faster in Ontario, where there is no public financial support and where tuition fees are three to four times higher than in Edmonton. Christian education grows best rooted in principled soil.

May God bless us all as we struggle to live faithfully in His world.



Co Vanderlaan is a retired employee of the Christian Labour Association of Canada.

U. S. pro-family stance at Children's Summit draws European objections

NEW YORK (Zenit.org) — European leaders at the United Nations' children's summit accused the U.S. delegation of being stubborn because it wants to bar maneuvers supportive of abortion or anti-family values.

Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson, who is leading the U.S. delegation, stood firm in private meetings recently in the face of strong European objections to U.S. positions such as abortion and redefinition of the family, the *Washington Times* reported.

Redefining the family

European delegations are pushing for the redefinition of the family "in its various forms." Language in documents of prior world conferences dating to 1995 give primacy to the natural husband-wife unit.

The United States is demanding the inclusion of other language stating that "marriage must be entered into with the free consent of the intending spouses, and husband and wife should be equal partners," sources familiar with negotiations for a final summit document told the *Times*.

The U.S. Delegation also is battling European insistence that "reproductive health services" be guaranteed by member states to all children, which, a senior Canadian negotiator recently admitted, included abortions.

A State Department legal adviser, Michael Dennis, told the *Washington Post* that the U.S. delegation wants the final document to promote abstinence.

Meanwhile, the European Union and certain Latin American countries of the so-called Rio Group removed language that said

To take a handout

I know farmers who on principle have refused some government subsidies. Those people are rare indeed. To turn down thousands of dollars because the payments were considered unnecessary or wrongly conceived takes a special kind of courage, especially when income might be modest at best.

I don't recall ever having refused a government cheque. Sometimes I've taken such money when our farm was not in trouble and sometimes when a handout was politically motivated. I may have been wrong to take the money at times, but generally Canada has for years now been cutting agriculture loose from long-standing support. If, as a Canadian farmer, I have to, hat in hand, accept ever-escalating input prices from multinational companies with budgets bigger than some countries, and if I have to compete against farmers in other countries heavily subsidized by protective governments, then anytime there is a handout I will be there. It is a matter of survival.

It is rather humiliating, though, to be holding out my hand as though I were begging. What we would all like to do is stand on our own feet and have the satisfaction of building an enterprise on our own. Accepting periodic assistance, does not engender enthusiasm and increased effort to do well.

Public sympathetic to farmers

Fortunately, the general population is sympathetic towards farmers. It is good to know others are sympathetic to our plight. That also compels politicians to make some concessions to the farming community if they want to be re-elected.

In the meantime, politicians, the press, the banks and their economists for years have promoted the simplistic solution for farming woes to be that farmers must become more efficient. Now, even though there are fewer farmers and together they are producing than ever before, the refrain continues. The call to become efficient is

COUNTRY COUNTERCULTURE

VERN M. GLEDDIE



nonsense. It has no context and no obvious end other than one farmer growing all the food in Canada.

The press tells the government in their editorials to "make Canada's farmers more competitive". The only way the government can do that or, more realistically, assist that, is to do what it can to present the best opportunity for farmers to farm.

Farmers stretched to the limit

Similarly, the oft-repeated mantra, "allow market forces to determine farming success" does not take into account the preservation of good land and the sustainability of food production. Also, farmers are notoriously over-capitalized. That means they own far more land, buildings and machinery and carry far more debt than their income justifies. They therefore don't have the ability to make frequent switches from the production of one product to another, particularly when livestock are involved. Generally, they are stretched to the limit.

I am sure it could be safely said that no government in Canada has or ever had a comprehensive agricultural plan that provided for the long-term survival of agriculture. Until we have a made-in-Canada plan, we will careen from crisis to crisis, inventing policies as we go, and regularly bailing out agriculture from man-made crises in addition to those known as acts of God.

As farmers become an endangered species and along the way lose what co-operative clout they once had, those of us who value the countryside, working the soil and raising animals will do what we have to within the law to remain on the land even if it means taking every sop offered to us.



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Environment

Christian environmentalists challenged to unite at earthkeeping conference

Harry der Nederlanden

The third biennial Faith and Earthkeeping Conference was held May 30 - June 1 at Redeemer College in ideal spring weather for the field trips, and it drew more than one hundred people from across Canada and some from the U.S. There was also a sizeable contingent of students.

Conferees were challenged, educated, inspired and impressed, not only by the meatiness of the speeches and workshops but by how much has been done as well as thought by Christians over the last decade. Exciting strides have been taken not just on a theoretical and theological level but also on a practical level.

New profession in making

Previous conferences have been held at Trinity Western in B.C. and King's College in Alberta, explained John Wood, one of the original organizers of the conferences. They were begun to bring together environmental practitioners, whether working in the areas of government and law, business and industry, education, religion, or the arts. But most participants have been in the engineering and biological sciences.

"It's a new profession in the making," said Wood, so it's a field hard to circumscribe. The conferences have been successful in creating a loose network among those committed to a faith-based approach.

One of the highlights of this conference, however, was the challenge thrown out by Fred van Dyke to all those practitioners to organize themselves as a formal association of Christian environmentalists so that they can better help one another develop a consistent,



HARRY DER NEDERLANDEN PHOTOS (4)

Fred van Dyke challenged environmental practitioners to organize themselves as a formal association of Christian environmentalists.

biblical approach to environmental issues.

At present, he said, environmentalist are engaged in a conflict, a sort of "civil war" between two parties. One camp is composed of scientists who seek to do research in a value-free way; they shun all advocacy in the name of professional objectivity and neutrality. Their task, as they see it, is merely to provide technical expertise. The other camp operates from the conviction that the conservation sciences are inescapably normative; they seek to discover what *is* in the light of what *ought* to be. Biodiversity and ecological complexity (a variety of plants and animals rather than just those we can sell), for example, have value in and of themselves, argued Van

Dyke, identifying with the second group.

Value beyond bottom line

If we succumb to the notion that things have value only if they have monetary value to us, we make 'the bottom line' the final standard. The momentary needs and wants of those with money will then rule our relationship to the natural world. Anything that does not serve our immediate desires will then quickly disappear. With such criteria, we will quickly lose wilderness and wild animals to development. If we confuse intrinsic values with personal needs and wants, those with the biggest wallets will end up deciding what happens to our land.

God, however, declared that his creation is good, which means that it is good in and of itself, not just in relation to the marketplace.

Traditionally, Van Dyke, pointed out, managers have set the norms and goals while scientists supplied information. He challenged the professionals present to create an organization of Christian environmentalists that would supply more; they must seek a far greater role, posing questions that recognize environmental norms. Research is also needed, he suggested, on how decisions and policies are made so that scientists know how to influence the process. We need to formulate external, not just subjective, norms and criteria to guide environmental efforts and that cannot be done by scientists individually but requires a community of Christian environmental scientists.

Autonomy, integrity, boldness

Van Dyke drew on ideas formulated by the Christian philosopher,



Derk Maat, an environmental engineer, gave an illustrated presentation of how his company uses bacteria already present in nature to break down oil contaminants into water and carbon dioxide.

Alvin Plantinga, to challenge Christian environmentalists to stop playing the game according to rules established by positivists, that is, by those who believe in value-free science. The sort of organization needed, he declared, needs to be characterized by *autonomy, integrity and boldness*.

It must be *autonomous* in order to pursue unique directions rooted in its Christian perspective. This is necessary to become *Christian* environmental professionals not just environmental professionals who happen to be Christian. Forming an association, insisted Van Dyke, is essential to defining what that calling is. An autonomous association is needed so that the Christian community will be able to resist the temptation to yield to other values and not abandon its norms and succumb to individualism.

Integrity - a sense of integral wholeness - depends upon developing a consistent framework from which Christian environmentalists can speak with one biblically informed voice on a range of issues. Such a consistent position enables us to resist the appeal of shallow alternatives and to provide compelling reasons for right actions.

Autonomy and integrity provide a base from which Christian scientists can speak with *boldness*, without anxiety about what other professionals will think of them. The knowledge that our position is rooted in biblical norms and is internally consistent will give us emotional strength and self-confidence, said Van Dyke, and for this

we need the support of brothers and sisters involved in the same struggle.

Fred van Dyke is Professor of Biology at Wheaton College in Illinois and a faculty member at the Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies in Michigan. He is the author of *Redeeming Creation: the Biblical Basis for Environmental Stewardship* (InterVarsity Press, 1996).

Bring environmental themes to worship services

Rev. Scott Hoezee, a minister at Calvin CRC in Grand Rapids, Michigan, gave one of lectures that was open free to the public. He encouraged us to bring environmental themes into our worship services. The way we worship tends to separate us from the outside world; we are physically and mentally removed from creation during worship. We must find ways to bring the outside in, Hoezee declared.

Churches that stress biblical authority most and do the best job of explicating Scripture tend to do the worst job of celebrating the environment. Evangelicals produce lots of books on faith and evolution but many fewer on taking care of and nurturing our present world.

Yet, creation and its redemption is one of the big themes of the Bible. It reveals that God loves his handiwork and so must we. God is good, God is love, because he delights in something other than himself, so we, too, should revel in creation.

See ENVIRONMENT p. 17...



Artwork at the Faith and Earthkeeping Conference: (left) Unearthing Golden Treasures, by Gwenda Dieleman, and (right) Ship of Fools, by Phil Irish.

Environment

Include 'people-keeping' in 'earthkeeping'

Alan Doerksen

ANCASTER, Ont. — Christians need to rethink the concepts of "stewardship" and "earthkeeping" so they include people as part of creation, not separate from it, says Dr. Jim Ball. The publisher and editor of *Creation Care* magazine was a keynote speaker at the recent Caring for Creation conference held at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ont., May 30 to June 1.

The focus of Ball's talk was "Evangelicals and Creation Care: What we've done and where we're going in light of Scripture." He gave an overview of how evangelicals have increased their involvement in protecting the environment, over the past 30 years.

A turning point

"Even in 1971, evangelicals were talking about global warming," he noted. One key turning point for evangelicals concerned with the environment was the formation of the U.S.-based Au Sable Institute in 1980. Because it was



HARRY DER NEDERLANDEN

Dr. Jim Ball

one of few Christian environmental groups at that time, "the 1980s could be called the Au Sable decade — they were really 'it' from an evangelical perspective," said Ball. Au Sable "was the meeting place, where people started networking."

In the 1990s, the Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN), which publishes *Creation Care*, was formed. As an active member of EEN, Ball explained some of its

projects. EEN drafted an evangelical declaration on creation, which has been signed by many prominent evangelical leaders. The network has also sponsored many conferences, has developed a resource kit for congregations called "Let the Earth be glad," and is involved with public education on environmental issues.

EEN also is active on the political front. In the U.S., in the 1990s, "we helped prevent the rollback of the Endangered Species Act," Ball explained.

Include people in creation

Ball believes that the terms "stewardship" and "earthkeeping" — which are popular in the Christian environmental movement — need to be rethought, because they don't mention "people-keeping." Likewise, the words "ecology" and "environment" don't imply the inclusion of people.

"Now I think we need to put people back," asserted Ball. "Creation, from a Biblical perspective, includes both humanity and the rest

of creation."

A key passage for Ball is Colossians 1:15-20, which speaks of Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross as reconciling all things in creation — not only humans — to God. "We cannot harm what Christ has reconciled us to," he emphasized, and Christians need to be God's "ministers of reconciliation."

Ball sees concern for the environment as having roots in the Bible. "Pollution hurts people — it violates the great commandments," he asserted. "You can't love your neighbor and pollute their body at the same time."

Health at heart of gospel

"Health lies at the heart of the gospel," he observed. "Jesus Christ is the source of all health and the abundant life. Health is God's will." Ball sees health, from a biblical perspective, as including physical, emotional and spiritual health. He pointed out that healing was one-third of Jesus' ministry work on earth.

Christians need to be especially concerned about the effects of pollution on the health of children, said Ball. "Children are more vulnerable because they are developing." An example is that children absorb 50 per cent of lead they are exposed to, compared with 10 to 15 per cent for adults. "Childhood cancer has risen sharply," he noted, and so has asthma. Still, many chemicals are not tested for their dangerous effects on people's health.

Ethical rule for technology

Ball has an ethical rule for new technology: "If it reduces or eliminates pollution, it should be developed and employed. If it creates more pollution than current technologies, it should not be developed or employed."

Ball was critical of the farm sector for causing much pollution. "We should reduce the use of pesticides [and] fertilizers," he asserted.

Asked if people themselves are pollution, Ball responded that people are sinful, but not pollution.

Stewardship in the city: managing Toronto's urban forest

Alan Doerksen

ANCASTER, Ont. — As an urban forester in Toronto, Richard Ubbens shares with his co-workers a vision "to have a city within a park." But keeping Canada's largest city green is a major challenge.

At the recent Caring for Creation conference, Ubbens spoke at a workshop on restoring native habitat in urban areas. He is the city forester for the City of Toronto, and is responsible for overall co-ordination of the city's Urban Forestry Program (UFP).

Ubbens' Christian faith is vital to his work, he explained. "Because I'm a Christian, creation is something more than what's here now. It's there for decades. Stewardship is a huge issue we push."

Creation, not just nature

"All my staff know I'm a Christian... I try to get them to understand where I'm coming from," Ubbens explained. "It's creation, not just nature." He has felt God calling him into his work, and said he has "a real passion for the natural environment." Ubbens gets inspiration from the first two chapters of Genesis, which tell the creation story. "To me, creation screams out the glory of God," he asserted.

Although it is a city of about three million people, Toronto also has three million trees, Ubbens pointed out. UFP has a major job



ALAN DOERKSEN

Richard Ubbens (right) discusses urban forestry with a conference participant.

taking care of these trees, with a staff of 180 and an annual budget of \$14 million. The city has 7,000 hectares of parks and 4,400 forested hectares.

Combating obstacles

Each year, UFP removes up to 7,000 trees, and plants 7,000 new ones. Its main focus is on "planting to renew areas, managing to maintain urban forest, and planning for the future," said Ubbens. "Maintenance is a huge part of what we do — it's 90 per cent of our budget." But planning for the future is also vital to his department. "We've got to look 100 years ahead or more."

A giant leap backward

One obstacle Ubbens has run into is the recent amalgamation of Toronto with neighboring cities. With amalgamation, "we took a giant leap backward" 20 or 30 years, Ubbens asserted. That's because the core city of Toronto had been far ahead of its neighbors with urban forestry management. Before amalgamation, the core city of Toronto had about 35 per cent ground coverage with trees, but the amalgamated city now has only about 20 per cent coverage. From the air or from space, one can see the boundary between the core city and its neighbors because of tree

coverage, he observed. But Ubbens and his department have a plan to achieve 35 per cent coverage of the whole amalgamated area.

Another obstacle UFP has faced is zoning rules about new neighborhoods, which limits planting of trees because of driveway sizes, utility lines buried underground, and other restricting factors. "We legislate ourselves out of being able to plant trees," Ubbens warned. But he added that Toronto's planning department shares his concerns about this, and wants more trees, too.

Toronto is growing rapidly, with another million people expected in the next 30 years — which means many new neighborhoods will be built in that time.

UFP is also battling against certain invasive plants, such as garlic mustard, which are threatening to take over hundreds of hectares. "We're losing our biodiversity," Ubbens asserted. But he told of a recent project in Toronto's High Park, in which his department worked to restore the original ecosystem.

Fire in middle of city

Recently, the park was found to have the remnants of a black oak savannah, which Ubbens said is "one of the rarest ecosystems on the entire planet." UFP decided to start restoring the savannah to the park. To do that, said Ubbens, "we

lit a fire in the middle of the city" — and burnt part of the park so that black oak seeds in the ground could germinate. UFP asked homeowners in the area to assist them with planting oaks.

When asked about smoke from the fire, Ubbens explained that his department sent out notices well ahead of time to groups such as the local Asthma Society.

Public education important

Public education is an important task for UFP, to prevent misunderstanding of its work, such as burning, explained Ubbens. "We get so much flak," he admitted. For instance, sometimes UFP is accused of logging an area, when it is only cutting a few trees to clean up a ravine.

UFP workers often have volunteers help them with tree-planting, and Ubbens encourages workers to educate volunteers about how UFP is managing Toronto's urban forest.

Having a healthy tree canopy brings many benefits to a city, such as promoting its health and liveability, explained Ubbens. Trees can help prevent skin cancer by blocking out harmful sunrays, for instance. Tree-lined streets are also more attractive to businesses than concrete jungles.

News Survey

Suspicious: from the White House to the world court

Harry der Nederlanden

What did Bush know and when did he know it? That's the question all the journalists were nattering about the last couple of weeks in May.

According to the FBI, Bush was briefed about the possibility that suspected Islamic terrorists were taking flying lessons and that there had been talk about crashing a plane into the Pentagon and the Twin Towers. An FBI hotshot in Phoenix apparently put two and two together and got the right answer weeks before the event. Although the report was sidelined in headquarters, apparently someone included information about Bin Laden's activities in an August 6 briefing at the White House.

Aha! Cover-up!

But Bush has always claimed that he didn't have an inkling that such plots were afoot before 9-11. Political opponents immediately sniffed another Watergate in the making. Aha! Cover-up! And, of course, the press was all over it, sniffing for every tidbit of intelligence that "should have" put the White House — and by implication, the entire country — on alert.

Hindsight is devastating. Any dramatic event leaves a scintillating trail of minor events like Halley's Comet streaking across a night sky.

Bush's image has been stained somewhat, and the intelligence boys in both the FBI and the CIA have mud on their faces. *Newsweek*, ever even-handed, put blame on both the left and the right. When Attorney General John Ashcroft, a right-wing evangelical, took office, he deflected the focus of the FBI from terrorism and wanted agents to focus more on violent crime and drugs. At the same time, a powerful judge, in defense of civil liberties and privacy, made it much more difficult for the FBI to eavesdrop on potential terrorists.

Inundated by information

We all have heard it proclaimed that we live in the information age. It may well be that intelligence agencies were so inundated by all sorts of information and pseudo-information that plots and rumors became so commonplace as to become almost meaningless. It's like getting a truckload of interlocking puzzles all tossed out of their boxes in one big heap and being asked to assemble one 500-piece puzzle out of the millions of mismatched pieces. It is actually amazing that one agent in Phoenix did pick out a few pieces and fill out the rest of the picture.

Looking back, we can now join



Jean Chrétien: accused of corruption in his government.

the chorus of those crying, "We should have known; we should have been warned; it could have been prevented."

Especially privileged and protected

Americans (and many Canadians as well), it appears, have been firm believers in common grace. They have felt that God or conscience would not permit anyone to commit such horrific deeds — at least, not against peace-loving Americans. This, despite terrorism, genocide and atrocities that have turned many millions into widows, orphans and refugees in nearly every other continent in the world. Was the Twin Towers atrocity such a shock because we thought of ourselves as a people especially privileged and protected because we are fundamentally good?

Now Al-Qaeda or anyone with a grudge against America need only create all kinds of false rumors about attacks on power stations, water supplies, bridges or buildings — the scenarios are infinite, many supplied by the news media — to spur these once-bitten agencies and the White House to sound the alarm again and again and spend millions more on security. Of course, then it won't be long before everyone stops paying attention to the boys crying wolf, and ... who knows?

Canadian conflicts of interest

It's all a matter of who buys the beer, according to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien. In Canada it's not about who knew what when but about doling out public funds to buddies, girlfriends and relatives.

Besides Chrétien himself, there have been: former Public Works Minister Alfonso Gagliano, who found ways to get his friends hired; Justice Minister Martin Cauchon,

who may have helped LaFleur finance a documentary about hockey great Maurice Richard; Solicitor General Lawrence Macaulay, who sought a \$3.5 million grant for a school headed by his brother; former Defence Minister Art Eggleton, who got \$36,500 for his girlfriend to write a 14-page report on stress disorder in the military (She ought to revise it to be about stress in the government); former Public Works minister Don Boudria got it in the neck for a weekend in a country house owned by a firm that does business with the government — but that was a measly \$800.

So our hard-working politicians are being branded as dishonest fellows corrupted by patronage and cronyism, that is, steering contracts to those you know and trust. It's a situation that demands better oversight, to be sure, but not all those being named by the headhunters are crooks. We need to be careful before making such charges; many of them go over the top, and they end up hurting the country by making people cynical and by turning good people away from the public square. Most of those who have made it into higher public office know many more people in the business world than you and me. It's harder for them to avoid the appearance of favoritism.

I'm guilty of cronyism myself: I recently hired on my wife to work part-time in the office because she had been doing many small jobs as a volunteer for the last couple of years. Nobody seemed scandalized. But maybe I've got my head in the clouds.

Gargantuan headaches in Colombia

Chrétien may have headaches, but the new president of Colombia, Alvaro Uribe, has gargantuan headaches. He campaigned on a platform of achieving peace with a strong fist in Colombia, which has been embroiled in a battle against guerrillas, bandits and drug lords for more than three decades. Judges and politicians have been assassinated, hundreds of authorities bribed and intimidated, hundreds kidnapped and held for ransom, including pastors, and many thousands killed in battles or terrorized and living in constant fear.

Uribe won a resounding first-round victory, taking 53 per cent of the vote. His predecessor,



Slobodan Milosevic: facing charges of genocide before the world's first permanent international war crimes court.

Andres Pastrana, sought peace by negotiating with the rebels, but achieved no success whatsoever — as they only grew bolder. War-weary and scared, this time the Colombian people voted for a strong man, at least one who talks tough. In order to win the war against rebels, who trade heroin for weapons, Uribe wants to nearly double the size of the army. For that, he seeks greater aid from the U.S., which already has given the country more aid than most countries.

"We ask God to illuminate us, to give us determination and energy to do good for Colombia," Uribe said to foreign reporters, according to Associated Press. And he added, "We need help from the U.S. in order to preserve our democracy."

Many churchmen will no doubt have misgivings about a military solution and will point to the existence of paramilitaries which have also killed with impunity. They fear that in establishing order, Uribe will trample on human rights. There does come a time, however, when the path of negotiation is exhausted and the people get so sick and tired of drawn-out anarchy and violence that they seek a decisive military solution, even if it is bloody.

Many knowledgeable people are of the opinion that had NATO intervened early and forcefully in the former Yugoslavia, it would have saved many lives, for Milosevic would never have moved on to Kosovo to do his ethnic cleansing there. One day our swords will be beat into plowshares, but in today's Colombia many farmers are afraid to go into their fields to plow; they have become refugees in their own land. They have been deprived of all sorts of rights.

Zimbabwe joins UN Commission

Meanwhile the international institution that has almost become a synonym for the cause of human rights — the UN — appointed Zimbabwe to its Human Rights Commission. The country's president, Robert Mugabe, recently won his re-election campaign with violence and foul play. Over the last couple of years, he has even encouraged his followers to break the law and seize farms belonging to white farmers.

"It's a huge problem. It has created a crisis," said Joanna Weschler, the UN representative for

Human Rights Watch. "This is not new. Zimbabwe is only part of a trend that started a few years ago when countries with quite atrocious human rights records fought and managed to become members of the Human Rights Commission." China, Syria and Sudan are also members of the Commission. The UNHRC consists of 53 seats that are allocated according to geography. Democracies in Europe and the Americas are a minority.

U.S. refuses to join

Little wonder that the U.S. refuses to join almost all of Europe and a host of other countries in ratifying the 1998 treaty establishing the world's first permanent international war crimes court. In 1998, it seemed like a good idea. A permanent court to try people involved in genocide, like Milosevic and his gang, or dictators who murdered critics of their regime, like Pinochet, would seem to make the world a safer place. Future Milosevics would think twice before ordering the extermination of peoples who stand in their way.

However, in recent years we have seen the spectacle of African states not just tolerating dictators but praising them, of Arab countries defending the likes of Saddam Hussein, of representatives of numerous countries accusing not just the U.S. but even Canada of genocide. On one of my more philosophical days, I might entertain notions of pluralism that admit that there are perspectives that differ radically from our Western point of view. There are millions out there who believe that the U.S. is committed to the systematic extermination of true Islam. There are millions in Europe who believe that free access to abortion is not

See WORLD page 17...

Sports/News

After the Buzzer

Tim Antonides



The gayness of it all

So he's not gay. Well, isn't that something. Now our lives can continue again.

I'm talking of course about Mike Piazza, the catcher for the New York Mets, who held a press conference to announce that he was a heterosexual. There was a reason for it apparently. A few days earlier, the Mets' manager (Bobby Valentine) had told the press that major league baseball was probably ready for an openly gay player. This touched off a media storm. Who could it be? The speculation went on forever. Maybe it was Derek Jeter of the Yankees or Nomar Garciaparra of the Red Sox. Maybe it was Mike Piazza.

Piazza decided to come out of the dugout and let us all know that he was a flaming heterosexual and that he liked "to date women." He actually handled it with a sense of humor, making light of the reporters who kept pressing for more details.

Preoccupied with sexual orientation

It's stupid how preoccupied our society is with the sexual orientation of its public figures. It was my understanding that we lived in a postmodern age where (sadly) truth was your own invention and where everyone's tendencies and preferences were completely acceptable and not up for scrutiny. As one of my classmates in an English class at Simon Fraser University jubilantly told me, we've finally transcended gender and sexual roles. She happened to be (as she put it) "in transition" from female to male.

It's tiring to watch people's obsession with the sexual orientation of others. If you mention the name of Svend Robinson (an openly gay MP from Vancouver) to most people, they immediately start talking about his homosexuality and not about his political work. They can't get past it. The same thing with Elton John. His gayness is as big a story as his music. Rosie O'Donnell's lesbianism is another public spectacle.

A life-altering distortion of God's design

Now let's get something straight. Someone's sexual identity is a big deal. It is a part of who they are. Homosexuality is a powerful, life-altering distortion of God's design. Despite what all the *Will and Grace* and *Survivor* episodes on TV directly or indirectly try to propagandize, I haven't accepted homosexuality as just another one of many acceptable lifestyles. It's a deviation. Still, there is such a thing as making too big a deal of someone's lifestyle, whether we condone or deplore it. The world has decided that the sexual tendencies of its public figures are a big deal. Dumb.

Sexuality is such an integral part of who we are. There are so many associations we make between one's sexuality and how we think of them, even in sports. When I hear certain names of players, I immediately make sexual connections. Wilt Chamberlain was a great basketball player, but all I really remember about him is that he claimed to sleep with 10,000 (?) women. I don't really know or care much about Wendell Clark as a Toronto Maple Leaf. I do know about all the jokes about his alleged homosexuality. It's sickening to think about how stuff like this takes over your psyche.

Even Pete Rose's gambling sins didn't affect people the way sexual sins do. It seems the more sexually deviant we become, the more we notice, accentuate, and even revel in the sexual abnormalities of others. Maybe it's part of being in an entertainment culture, too. Most people's lives are so ordinary and clichéd compared to what they can see on TV and read about, they look forward to hearing about anything that's weird or peculiar about someone else.

Time to get a life.



Tim Antonides teaches Grade 8 and is a basketball coach at Surrey Christian School in Surrey, B.C.

English Churches postpone worship during World Cup

LONDON, England (Religion Today) — Soccer and church will clash during the upcoming World Cup in East Asia. England's opening match against Sweden kicks off in Saitama (Japan) at Sunday worship prime time: 10:30 a.m. As millions of Britons will be glued to their TV screens, many churches are postponing their worship until after the match. The Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, has given his official approval.

Unperturbed by the sports competition, Catholic churches will hold Sunday mass at the usual times. Some Anglican priests are also adamant that the church should not bow before soccer.

Rev. Geoffrey Kirk of Lewisham told *The London Times* the very idea of moving the service rendered him almost speechless: "If we in the Church of England have actually generated a group of



AMSTERDAM 2001

George Carey

Christians who are so brain-dead that they cannot even record the thing on a video and discharge their primary obligation on Sunday morning to go to church, then we might as well pack up and go home."

Football takes second place

Other clergy are trying to make the most of the situation. Rev. Harry Ross in Liverpool: "God must come first, but football is second." Ross will place his church warden in front of the TV in the vestry and get him to signal if England scores a goal during the service. That way he will keep the congregation up to date from the pulpit. Other churches plan to put up video screens and show the soccer match live before the worship service.

Rev. John Hartley of Bradford will preach to the theme "Make Jesus the centre forward of your life." And he has written a special evangelistic soccer hymn: "Before I met the Savior Jesus, my life was full of holes: I couldn't do the good I wanted, I couldn't score the goals."

Patenting higher life-forms needs public discussion

... continued from page 3

inexorably to the objectification of the animal.

"If the Court were to allow a patent on a mouse in this case, it would be reasonable to ask where the line on patentability will ultimately be drawn, if at all. These moral and ethical concerns, which could not have been considered by the legislature in the 19th century when the Act was first passed, are strong policy reasons why this court should not extend patent protection to higher life forms. If patent protection is to be extended at all, the decision should be left to Parliament, which is best placed to consider and weigh the policy concerns for and against the patenting of higher life forms."

Japan, Europe patented mouse

Looking at the international scene, the U.S. allowed Harvard to patent the mouse in 1988. "Japan and the European Union have all allowed patenting of the mouse," adds Clemenger.

Before the current court case, EFC wrote to the Canadian government "asking that they do two things: appeal the decision [to patent the mouse] to the Supreme Court of Appeal, and revisit the Patent Act."

CCC's Rev. David Pfrimmer has also written to the Prime

Minister, asking the government to appeal the decision to patent the mouse. He argued at the time, "This decision of the Federal Court of Appeal represents an unprecedented expansion, in Canada, of the concept of what can be patented.... Serious public discussion is needed before laws are amended, or developed, to make room for the patenting of higher life forms."



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Father's Day/Opinion

Passing on a legacy is a father's most important role



The other Father's Day 'honoree' in our family, my husband, was present for the birth of our children, has changed countless diapers, and gives as many hugs as I do.

Lisa M. Petsche

In our family, Father's Day is a time of mixed emotions. Partly it involves sombre reflection. That's because, a decade ago, my husband's father died on that occasion following post-surgical complications.

It was a crisis that seemed unreal. My husband, his mother and his sister kept vigil at the intensive care unit over a painfully long, four-day period during which hope gradually faded. Meanwhile, I cared for our first-born infant daughter at home and handled phone calls from relatives and friends.

Timing seemed all wrong

As a new mother, I felt the timing couldn't be much worse. In retrospect, being on maternity leave allowed me to be more available to my in-laws during a difficult time, binding us closer together that summer and fall. Plus, our precious baby provided my husband and me with a much-needed diversion that helped keep us grounded. But at the time, it felt strange and lonely, not being at the hospital with the rest of the family.

My husband assured me I was where I needed to be. Praying throughout the day became my

primary means of helping, and brought me comfort.

A pivotal moment was a phone conversation with my husband shortly before midnight on Saturday. His report: Dad was in and out of consciousness — mostly the latter — in poor condition, but stable. The family was exhausted, ready to come home for a short break.

As he was about to end the call, I suddenly realized Father's Day was just minutes away. I was overcome with an inexplicable feeling of urgency. Go visit your dad once more before you leave, I advised, almost pleading. And so my husband went back before heading home.

Three hours later, the dreaded call woke us from superficial sleep: "Your father has taken a turn for the worse." Before anyone could get to the hospital, he quietly slipped away.

I like to think he held on until Father's Day in order to express how much parenthood meant to him, since he was no longer able to speak.

First and last Father's Day

Ironically, his last Father's Day was my husband's first — one that never did get celebrated. In the weeks that followed, we were grateful for the many, often humorous reminiscences shared by fellow mourners. Some of the stories were new not only to me but to my husband as well. We share them now with our three kids.

Although we're sad they didn't get the chance to know their Poppa (Grandpa), we try to focus on the positive: that he lived long enough

to see his son become a father. That means a lot to my husband,

'The fixer'

Thankfully, my own father remains very much a part of our lives — one of the reasons there's still joy on Father's Day. A home renovation contractor by vocation, Dad is known to my kids as "the fixer" who can repair anything, from a broken toy to backed-up plumbing and anything in between.

He has always been there for my sisters and me, regularly helping us out in all kinds of situations, often without our even having to ask. He's also a wonderful example of a practicing Christian, deeply involved in his church community

and beyond.

The other Father's Day 'honoree' in our family, my husband, is best described as a hands-on dad, typical of his generation. He was present for the birth of our children, has changed countless diapers, and gives as many hugs as I do.

Less typical, though, is the transformation he recently underwent: from a commuter who headed off to work at dawn and returned, stressed and tired, just as the children were going to bed, to someone who accompanies his children to and from school each day, makes their lunches, helps with homework and attends their soccer games. (After company

downsizing left him without a job, he decided to start a home-based business that would allow him more time with family. Now he can't imagine life any other way.)

Of course, fathers — like mothers — are a diverse group consisting of many different personality types, with varied skills, life experiences and philosophies. What the best ones have in common, though, is this perspective: that putting a good person out into the world is the most important thing they will ever do.

Lisa M. Petsche is a mother of three and freelance writer in Stoney Creek, Ont.

Which colleges are you attending?

Building Trust
Vicky Van Andel Ed.



Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

When I graduated from Trinity Christian College in 1977, I had no idea I would continue to attend colleges the rest of my life, despite the fact that I haven't returned to school since.

Tillie Olsen, author of *Tell Me a Riddle* and *Yonnondio: From the Thirties*, said there are five colleges: "the college of motherhood, of human struggle, of everyday work, of literature, and of contrast."

Perhaps you've studied at a post-secondary institution and benefitted from a formal education. Or perhaps you didn't and regret having missed the opportunity. Either way, according to Olsen, you've attended college or are attending college. In other words, even if you're not aware of it, you've learned a lot in these colleges and have much to contribute to your family, church, school, community, and country.

If you want to fully fathom what you've learned and what you have to contribute, try the following exercise. You'll be amazed at what you discover.

Just brainstorm

First, ask yourself which colleges, in Olsen's categories, you have attended or are attending. In a journal, write down what you have learned in each college. When you write, just brainstorm. Don't edit your thoughts as you write.

You might be surprised at some of the things you record. Many will be positive, but some may also be negative. When you've completed the exercise, thank God for all he has taught you about himself, others, and this world.

Second, ask yourself if there is some way you can share what you have learned to enhance someone else's quality of life. Can you use what you learned in the college of motherhood to mentor a single pregnant teenager, to support a young mother with several children and few life skills, or to advise a woman with an unwanted pregnancy not to seek abortion as a solution? Can you apply what

you learned in the college of literature to pass on to children a love for books? Can you use what you learned in the college of human struggle to walk beside a refugee family, offering comfort, prayer, material goods, and helpful information?

Learn from each person you meet

Third, as you grow in recognizing all you've learned in the various colleges, realize that everyone else around you is also enrolled in these colleges. Become an active listener. Ask others what they have learned in the different colleges and glean from their perspectives. Garner wisdom from positive outcomes in their experience and avoid making the same mistakes which hurt them. Make a conscious choice to learn from each person you meet.

Fourth, ask God to remove obstacles in your life that lead you to think you don't have much to contribute. Many women I've spoken to, regardless of their education, struggle with feelings of inadequacy and ineptitude in terms of giving leadership in their communities or contributing in other ways. When these feelings dominate their decisions, they cut themselves off from spiritual, relational, and emotional growth.

The bottom line is that, whether or not you've gone to an institutional college, you've learned a lot. And God can and will use you to build his kingdom. Let him remove barriers. Pray for his guidance, and then wait for him to do many exciting things in your life which will give him glory.

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema is a freelance writer and frequent contributor to Christian Courier who lives in St. Catharines, Ont.

Anyone who would like to contribute to this column is invited to contact Vicky Van Andel via fax at: 1-780-473-0970 or by e-mail at: vanandel@oanet.com.



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Opinion/News Survey/Environment

Kitchen sink Kingdom service

Morris N. Greidanus

If, as a Canadian, I ever thought that our church members in Grand Rapids, Mich., were mainly interested in saving souls and did not have the Kuyperian kingdom vision that comes with bracing winters, hockey, and *hagelslag*, my recent years in GR have taught me that our sisters and brothers here know plenty about living their faith in their daily lives.

Only one-quarter Reformed and Dutch

Grand Rapids is only about one-quarter Reformed and of Dutch origin, but the impact on the city of this concentration of committed Christians is significant. I could mention the churches such as First CRC, Eastern, Grace, LaGrave, Sherman, Fuller Ave, Neland, Madison Square, Oakdale Park, Coit Ave, and Calvin that have stayed put in their changing/changed neighborhoods to minister with food pantries, tutoring, youth work, budgeting classes, and clean-up programs. Or that our deacons in First CRC find outreach their main task and work hard at helping those in poverty. Or the work in affordable housing of groups such as Inner City Christian Federation and Habitat for Humanity.



Home Repair Services is a nonprofit agency with the mission to help low-income homeowners maintain and improve their homes at a low cost.

But let me mention in some detail the down-to-earth work of Home Repair Services. The city, social agencies, and churches agree that home ownership is a crucial step-up out of poverty and into stability for individuals, families, and neighborhoods. But how do you maintain a home when you've always rented and never learned those skills?

Home Repair Services (HRS) is

a nonprofit agency with the simple mission to help low-income homeowners to maintain and improve their homes at a low cost. HRS began in 1979 as a spinoff from work begun by the Catholic Human Development Office and a Helping Hands group of the CRC's Church of the Servant. CRC members have been influential on its board and staff. Dave Jacobs, the executive director, is an elder in First CRC. He was a social worker at Pine Rest (mental health facility), but joined HRS in 1982 "to put his experience

in urban social work together with his background in the building trade."

The results of that mix are obvious. HRS has skilled repair teams that will repair an unsafe furnace or a leaky roof. They'll do that with federal and state money and a small fee from the low-income homeowner — \$35 to repair a furnace, for example.

But they would just as soon teach the homeowner to do simple jobs themselves. A broken toilet can be repaired for an estimated \$18! How? There are classes in repairing plumbing, painting a room, or doing simple electrical work. Inexpensive materials are available from the Builder's Abundance warehouse, which is stocked with surplus supplies donated by builders, so that a can of paint could cost only \$5. If you don't have the tools, there's a tool-lending library, where ladders and saws can be borrowed on a small deposit.

'Get the lead out'

The care for the dignity of low-income persons includes those who are physically disabled. Bathtub grab bars and wheelchair ramps are installed. Those who have trouble with their budget can get financial counseling. And the health of children is the special concern of a recent project "to get the lead out." Old lead-based paint is a health

hazard for children living in the older houses of the core city. It is removed and covered. Dave Jacobs sees window replacement as the next need, because old windows are not only an energy drain but also a source of lead dust.

All this good work happens out of a shiny, renovated automobile dealership building in a once run-down part of town where offices, classrooms, warehouse, a demonstration cutaway house, and committed staff and volunteers work together to give hope and push back poverty. HRS is a "neutral" nonprofit with no mention of evangelism in its mission statement. But love for the low-income neighbor is obvious in the whole program — when a do-it-yourself project overwhelms or when a cheap sink is needed.

Kingdom service is a pretty big concept here — right down to the kitchen sink!



Morris Greidanus is a Canadian-American living in Grand Rapids, Mich. Greidanus has served at First CRC, Grand Rapids since 1985.

World court could become political tool

... continued from page 14

just a woman's right but an answer to overpopulation in Third World countries.

Who can guarantee that a world court will not become a political tool of the enemies of Israel, for instance? If the UN Human Rights Commission can be rendered useless by putting some of the worst violators on the bench rather than before the bench, the same can happen to a world court. You don't have to go abroad for warped perspectives (and some not-so-warped ones) that paint well-meant ventures as criminal acts. Take the residential schools for native children in Canada: there are any number of websites where you will find this described as a deliberate and systematic program of genocide. It is not totally in the realm of fantasy to imagine a world court that would call to The Hague those officials and churchmen who established those institutions.

Favorite country to hate

The U.S. has become the favorite country to hate and to paint as an evil empire. It is no wonder that the

U.S. is reluctant to cede jurisdiction to the court in cases where persons or governments are accused of "crimes against humanity" — an extremely elastic phrase.

No check on its power

An editorial in the *National Post* points out that "...there will be no check on its power to try national leaders, soldiers or even ordinary citizens. This is chief among the U.S. objections. They fear that should activist, anti-U.S. justices be appointed to the [court] — a real likelihood — U.S. diplomats and soldiers, and perhaps even businessmen and tourists, will find themselves arrested in foreign countries for engaging in what leftist prosecutors consider humanitarian abuses."

Canada has been one of the prime movers behind the idea of a permanent world court, but it has been overly trusting and naive in not insisting that certain safeguards be put in place to limit such a court's authority. As it now stands, the court would have an overriding jurisdiction even in those countries that have not signed on.

Environment workshops were eye-openers

... continued from page 12

Hoezee suggested several ways to deepen our own and our children's appreciation of creation, among them: taking vacations in real parks rather than amusement parks, stopping to gaze and be amazed ourselves, bringing more of the outside into our worship with banners and paintings, and having pastors draw more of their illustrations from nature.

Rev. Scott Hoezee has written, among other works, *Remember Creation* and has a book in the works titled *Science on Sunday: Preaching God's Word in a World of Science*.

Interspersed with the lectures were a number of workshops that drew high praise from conferees, largely because they tended to bring the more general principles articulated at the plenary sessions in very concrete ways. Since the workshops are held at the same time, one has to pick and choose which to attend. Afterward, when you hear others talking about another section, you wish you could have been there for that one too. The workshops I was able to attend

were eye-openers to me and impressed me deeply by how far our Christian environmentalists have already come in the last two decades, not just in terms of theory but also in practice.

Hard to fix polluted sites

Derk Maat, an environmental engineer, gave an illustrated presentation of how his company uses bacteria already present in nature to break down oil contaminants into water and carbon dioxide. It was a vivid example of something he'd learned from one of his teachers: that for every man-made pollutant there's something made by God to remedy it. Bacteria that are present naturally are stimulated with nutrients and oxygen to make them multiply much faster.

Maat used a concrete example of a project in process to illustrate how hard it is to bring all the stakeholders together and to make them see how complex it is to remedy polluted sites. In his example, pollution on the surface of a development side turned out to have created much more serious problems far underground that threat-

ened local groundwater and a nearby river, the source of the town's drinking water. Maat's company has the technology to treat the problem, but getting the communal will and funds to restore the environment is a different matter.

In another workshop, Elbert van Donkersgoed of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario demonstrated a link among the drive for ever cheaper food, the loss of our best farmland, and the emergence of the large industrial farm as part of an overall trend. Using statistics and graphs, he showed that the more efficient farmers become, the smaller their profit margins, and the greater the pressure to become larger and buy more technology. Meanwhile, city sprawl gobbles up the best farmland in the country and puts pressure on smaller farmers to sell to developers. Larger industrial farms, however, put a much greater strain on the environment than the traditional family farm. Van Donkersgoed argued that we had to find ways to mitigate the effects of the global market on the farm if we want to keep a healthy countryside.

News Comment

Note for News



Bert Hielema

ACRONYMS ARE ALL THE rage. We know about CIA, FBI, CSIS, but now there is a new one: TMI: Too Much Information, something especially intelligence gathering bodies suffer from.

"Forget about James Bond," wrote *Newsweek* last week, in its lead story on September 11, with the caption, *What went wrong*. "Intelligence gathering is more like taking a metal detector to the city dump. So much comes in, rumor, hearsay, disinformation, so little of it more than trash."

Now, more than eight months after that fateful day, we suddenly learn that there actually were strong warning signals after all, which the authorities chose to ignore. *Time Magazine* also dug into the FBI information foul-up. *Newsweek* concluded that "the son of a CIA chief, George W. Bush has always preferred to operate with secrecy and surprise. Cheney sees Congress and the media as annoyances — at best."

Time suggested that "The homeland defense system is still broken, and much is left undone."

Now I am asking: Why didn't the Bush Administration connect the dots that unmistakably pointed to a horrendous attack then, and why don't they connect the dots now, that signal even worse bio-chemical catastrophes to come, endangering the lives of millions?

Maybe we, politicians and real people, all are so bedeviled by our computer lingo, chock-full with dot this and dot that, that we are oblivious to see the danger-dots in daily life out there.

I, FOR ONE, SEE LOTS OF significant signals. The terror-dots are not the only trouble spots out there.

Should I mention again the danger-dots in the financial system, the unexpected collapse of Enron, which has shaken faith in the integrity of corporate America and the Wall- and Bay Street model of capitalism; the huge amount of debt accumulated by firms and people, based on the mistaken belief that the stock market will go up forever and ever? Or the threatened return to Europe and Japan of the trillions of dollars which so far have propped up the American Dollar, now in danger of collapse?

Should I mention again our refusal to take seriously the dots all over the environmental map: freakish weather, dying coral reefs, disappearing fish stocks, alarming increases in certain cancers, vanishing forests?

A few days ago a report by The United Nations Environment Program, underwritten by more than 1,000 earth scientists, connected a few dots, concluding that, while humans for millennia have feared 'acts of God' such as deluge and drought, they are now vulnerable to much worse: 'acts of man,' played out through nature. Half of the world's rivers are polluted or seriously depleted. Forty per cent of the world's people have serious water shortages. Many of the so-called dot.coms are gone, but other dots are multiplying like dandelions, that yellow flower, considered a pest, but good for bees, so let them 'bee'. Take note: bees are another dot, often overlooked. *The Washington Post* reports that, where one-third of the food crops need insect pollination, we

have been losing 80 per cent of our wild honeybee populations.

"So what?" you may ask, "They are a nuisance anyway." Well, think again. A quotation attributed to Albert Einstein predicts that: "If the bee disappeared off the surface of the globe, then man would only have four years of life left." So, as the bee goes, so do we. Maybe we should have a dot-bee, to round up all loose ends and start connecting.

Dots. Dots. Dots all over. Enough to drive everybody dotty. Perhaps there just are too many problem-dots out there and so, we — governments, corporations, consumers — all pretend they are not there at all. Or is our view so bewitched, that, instead of dotted lines, we only see dollar signs, and so, blind to reality, cannot connect the dots on national security, cannot connect the dots of environmental matters, cannot connect the dots of twisted economic policies, ignoring the obvious logic of the impossibility of perpetual economic growth?

TMI: TOO MUCH INFORMATION. T.S. Eliot, Anglo-American poet and critic, prophesied some 70 years ago: "Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?"

Well, a group of Christians came together in Redeemer University College from May 30 to June 2, to connect the dots on creation, to find the knowledge in information and the wisdom in knowledge, working our way up in the maze of life. One lady with an English accent remarked, after one of the many presentations, that non-Christians have long been active in the field. We, Christians, are pretty 'green' in this environment business, while these seculars, as we call them, know that they have only this world, something that we have not professed in our lives. I think the old song, fortunately no longer found in most hymn books, still vibrates in our innards: "I am a stranger here, upon a foreign strand. My home is far away upon the golden strand."

On May 31, in the evening's free public lecture, Rev. Scott Hoezee of Calvin CRC in Grand Rapids, mentioned that the more conservative a church is in its teaching, the less conservationist it is in creational outlook. Although open to the public, very few people took the opportunity to hear his talk, entitled "Outside In: Worship to God's World of Wonder and Delight," while hundreds paid their way the next night to hear a one-person comedy presentation. I think there we hit the core of the

matter. Christians would much rather be entertained by some witty chap than reminded of the seriousness of our task, which nevertheless is a joy to pursue. With apologies to T. S. Eliot, I wonder "Where is the joy we have lost in entertainment? Where is the entertainment we have lost in television?"

DURING THE CONFERENCE, which had as its title *Faith and Earthkeeping*, there was a special workshop for ministers, repeated once. The first one was attended by three, I am told, and the second one, where I was present, by one member of the clergy. I believe that only two CRC ministers attended the entire conference, of which one was a participant: Rev. Hoezee. The point I am making is that the church doesn't see the connection between Faith and Earthkeeping. Fortunately, more and more young people do; this was the best attended of the three held so far.

This minister's workshop was led by Stephen Scharper, a Roman Catholic and assistant professor both of religious ethics and ecology studies at the University of Toronto. He mentioned Thomas Aquinas, which made me, at home, go back to a book I have by this saintly man, who wrote in his *Via Positiva* that: "Of all the divine gifts to be commemorated, the first and foremost is that of the Creation, which calls to mind the sanctification of the Sabbath. This is why the reason for this precept is given in Exodus 20:11: In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, but the seventh day.... The sanctification of the Sabbath is in memory of the creation of all things."

SO, WHILE A FEW Christians have organized an environmental conference every other year: Edmonton four years ago, Vancouver in 2000 and Hamilton this year, in reality each Sabbath Day, according to Thomas Aquinas, should be a celebration of God's greatness in creation. Seen in this light, a correct one I think, we, the church, miss the entire point of worship, so no wonder that no ministers feel the need for such a gathering.

The Saturday Evening banquet featured, besides some good food and fine fellowship, a thoroughly documented and well illustrated address by Henry Hengeveld on "Global Climate Change: Should Christians be concerned?" Henry Hengeveld is Environment Canada's Senior Advisor on this matter and is, indeed, well qualified. Although, by now, nobody can

claim ignorance on this phenomenon as an excuse, in day-to-day life we continue to proceed as if there is not a cloud on the horizon. I was touched when, in his conclusion, he showed 2 Peter 3: 13, and, if you are at all acquainted with my columns, you know what I am referring to: "We are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness."

That was one quote I missed in other presentations. Strangely enough, after telling us how bad things are and how we have not shown any intention to alter our destructive life style, most speakers express the hope that somehow, miraculously, humans will see the light and make a sea-change, experience a totally unexpected transformation, even though it was pointed out by several that many scientists are now convinced that science can no longer accomplish environmental healing, and so, as a last resort, now turn to the churches, because only a complete new morality can save us.

So, you small number of ordained men who were present there are now the Gideon band for the church at large.

Frankly I came to this conference not expecting much. I came away with a feeling that somehow a community had been formed, and I thank the organizers for their success. I was impressed with the workshops, especially the one of Bioremediation.

I FEEL IN MY GUTS THAT the Lord will return much sooner than we think. Quoting Peter again: "The Day of the Lord will come like a thief," thus totally unexpected. Then a lot of bioremediation is needed. God always works through his people. We cannot do anything without God and God will not do anything without us. So even the eventual clean-up of the mess we have created, will be part of our job.

That is the ultimate merit of a conference such as this. We are slowly and hesitantly and falteringly learning to live, as Peter wrote: "holy and godly lives as we look forward to the day of God." We also, curiously, through the pollution we cause, are speeding up its coming. So, even as we drive our cars (sparingly, I hope), burn fossil fuels to heat us in the winter and cool us in the summer, in our 'ethical sinning' we are hastening the happening of the Kingdom.

Bert Hielema used solar powered electricity to compose this column on his computer, a new iMac.

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News/Business Directory

Tutu launches charity for displaced farmers, workers in Zimbabwe

HARARE, Zimbabwe (ENI) — Desmond Tutu, the former South African Anglican archbishop and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, and some sympathizers in the United Kingdom have formed a charity to aid commercial farmers in Zimbabwe affected by their government's controversial land reforms.

The Zimbabwe Agricultural Welfare Trust has been established in Britain to "provide a focal point for international support" for farming families and other agricultural workers caught up in the haphazard and sometimes violent land redistribution program.

The trust is expected to complement local efforts by churches and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as the Catholic Jesuit Society in looking after victims of the resettlement program.

Alleviating hardship

The charity's aim is to alleviate "the hardship and suffering" of the farming community in Zimbabwe, which has "been directly affected

by the civil unrest", Lao Watson-Smith, the trust's administrator, told the Harare-based *Independent* newspaper.

Tutu, who has condemned his own government for endorsing Zimbabwe's controversial presidential election in March, is the patron of the trust, which is chaired by James Maberly, a Kenyan-born humanitarian activist who spent his childhood in Zimbabwe.

At least 11 farmers and seven workers have been killed, thousands assaulted and physically abused and nearly one million farm workers and their dependants displaced since February 2000, when members of President Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front political party and veterans of the country's 1970s liberation war launched a series of farm invasions, according to the General Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe and Human Rights Forum.

The marauders targeted proper-

ties belonging to white farmers whom they accused of sponsoring a campaign to reject a draft constitution drawn up by a commission handpicked by President Mugabe.

The proposed constitution had a clause authorizing the government to compulsorily acquire, without compensation, any farm belonging to white large-scale farmers.

Invasions intensified

The invasions intensified late last year in the run-up to the country's presidential election.

The Commercial Farmers Union estimates that nearly half of Zimbabwe's 4,000 white farmers have been driven off their properties since the onset of the invasions, which have left farm workers and their families stranded at roadsides. Farmers who attempted to assist them were attacked. Some farmers have since migrated to neighboring Mozambique.

Nearly half of the affected workers are descendants of Mozambican, Malawian and

Zambian migrant workers, according to estimates of the Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe, a Zimbabwe welfare organization that looks after displaced farm workers and their families.

The workers lost their citizenship last year, when the government passed a new citizenship law. As foreigners, they are not eligible for resettlement under the government's land reform program.

Recently, riot police broke up a "refugee camp" outside Harare where farm workers from Marondera and Hwedza farming districts had erected temporary shelters with help from the Farm Community Development Trust, a welfare organization led by the Rev. Tim Neill, former vicar general of the Harare Anglican diocese.

'Horrific' crisis

Watson-Smith, of the new Zimbabwe Agricultural Welfare Trust, said the land reforms had created a "horrific" humanitarian crisis.

"Apart from the documented

cases of torture on the farms, numerous laborers have been rendered homeless, jobless and without access to education and health-care as the farms have been abandoned and businesses closed," he said. "We undertake to provide assistance with and promotion of physical and mental health, education, financial needs and general welfare of the agricultural community."

Many NGOs in Zimbabwe and abroad have warned that the country is on the verge of a humanitarian crisis due to famine caused in part by the government-backed farm invasions which have sabotaged food production, undermining the once-thriving agricultural industry.

Some six million people — more than half of the population — need food aid, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Program said in a joint news release issued on May 29, and many more are expected to need aid by the end of the year.

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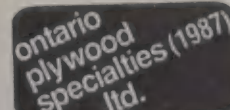
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Proverbs 18:22 With praise and thanksgiving to God, we are happy to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents ALBERT and JENNY VALKENBURG (nee Greidanus) Nellie & John Hoogendoorn - Clinton Nathan, Michael, Alisa, Janelle Wynne & John Mosterd Stratford ON - Jonathan, Rachel, Nicole, Justin Peter & Geraldine Valkenburg - Markham ON - Benji, Anna Ruth, David John, Tim Alice & Gerald Mosterd - Bowmanville ON - Jennifer, Jared, Greg, Carly Dorothy & Jerry Kassies - London ON Jonathan, Caitlin, Jason John & Wilma Valkenburg - Richmond Hill ON - Albert, Matthew, Joshua, Michael Cristina & John Arends - Mount Brydges ON - Joshua, Dan, Luke, Samone Henry & Tina Valkenburg - Port Perry ON - Amy, Erika, Janelle, Mark Please join us for an OPEN HOUSE on August 10, 2002 at the Clinton & District Christian School, Clinton, Ont. from 2-4pm. Best wishes only please. Home address: 45 Charles St., Unit 102, RR # 1, Clinton, ON N0M 1L0 Phone: 519-482-9454</p> <p>1952 July 13 2002 Clarkson, ON Strathroy, ON "O Lord God, blessed are those who trust in you." Psalm 84 With joy and gratitude to God, we wish to congratulate our parents, and grandparents, HENRY and MAGDALENA DEKKER (nee DEKKER) on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary. With LOVE from all of us, each in our own unique way. Annette Dekker & Henry Tensen Nicolas, Justin, Lucas Kitchener, ON Jim & Grace Dekker Ryan Port Franks, ON Gwendolyn Dekker & Don Vanderklok Jozina, Jordan, Marike Sarnia, ON Evelyn Dekker & Wayne Harris Sietzka, Leah, Naomi Kitchener, ON George & Florie Dekker Peter, Heather, Tina Kingsville, ON Joyce & Duri Dobranski Dustin, Loren, Digby London, ON We invite all those who wish to congratulate our parents to attend an OPEN HOUSE on Sat., July 6, from 2 - 4 pm at Westmount CRC, Westmount Ave, Strathroy, ON Home Address: 127 Eastman Ave Strathroy, ON N7G 3J9</p> <p>50th Anniversary With joy and thanksgiving GERRIT and JOHANNA SMEES (nee HEUSINKVELD) will be celebrating 50 years of marriage on July 3, 2002. Congratulations from their children and grandchildren. Home address: RR#1, Hopewell, Nova Scotia, B0K 1C0</p>	<p>May 18, 1917 May 29, 2002 The Lord called home our dear sister, GRACE VAN ASSEN (nee ZEE) Widowed since last December. Loved by one brother and seven sisters. Contact address: G. Zee, #138-13425 57th Street, Edmonton, AB T5A 2G1</p> <p>Nov. 4, 1921 May 15, 2002 ANN HAAYEMA (nee) POSTMA Predeceased by her husband George in 1996. Lovingly remembered by children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren: Clarence (Norma) - Abbotsford, BC Garner (fiancee Michelle) - Calgary, AB Roger Zina (Brad) Adams - Susie, Katie, David Joyce Jayne (Andy) Maarhuis - Chilliwack, BC Stephen (Rachel) - Ethan Nicola (Chris) Cowley - Byron Chad Crystal Also remembered by sisters and brothers: Saakje VanAgteren-Postma, Oeds Postma, Wietske Schendelaar - Postma, all of the Neth., John (Wilma) Postma of Iowa USA, Paul (Margaret) Postma of Abbotsford BC, brothers and sisters-in-law, and numerous nephews and nieces. Correspondence address: C. Haayema, 4976 Bell Rd., Abbotsford, BC V3G 1R4</p> <p>August 20, 1916 May 31, 2002 Sassenheim Waterdown Peacefully at his home on Friday, May 31 the Lord called to his eternal home our loving husband, dad, and opa at the age of 85 CORNELIUS DORSMAN Beloved husband of Elizabeth (Bep) Dorsman (Kranenburg). Loving Dad of Casey & Jane Dorsman - Burlington Henry & Carol Dorsman - Burlington Wilma & Kerry Boonstra - Campbellville Pete & Gerda Dorsman - Georgetown Liz Dorsman - Burlington John & Barb Dorsman - Flamborough Helen & Jim Herrewynen - Waterloo (All in Ontario) Dear Opa of 21 grandchildren. We thank the Lord for the long life He has given Him and for the blessing he has been to all of us. Correspondence Address: Mrs. E. Dorsman, 1 Brian Bld. Box 4, Waterdown ON L0R 2H5</p> <p>1964 May 18 2002 Guelph, ON Fort William, ON "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord" Job 1:21b As a result of a boating accident in Georgian Bay on Saturday May 18, 2002, God called home our blessed son and brother: ALBERT HENK VAN OMMEN Lovingly remembered by his parents: Willy and Ben Dear brothers: Arthur, Ray & Teresa, Harold Loving uncle of David and Virginia. Survived by uncles, aunts and cousins in the Netherlands. The funeral service was held at 1st CRC Guelph on May 23, 2002. Pastor Jack Van de Hoef officiated. Correspondence address: 63 Cedar St., Guelph ON N1G 1C4</p> <p>March 4, 1921 May 12, 2002 Heerabskerke, Brampton, the Neth. Ontario "He said, 'Follow Me.'" John 1:43b "God is our refuge and strength." Ps 46:1 MARIA JOZINA (MEIJAARD) REHORST On Sunday, May 12, 2002, in the presence of her family, the Lord lovingly wrapped His arms around Maria Jozina (Meijaard) Rehorst, and placed her in heaven. Maria, formerly of Clinton, Ontario, was cared for at Faith Manor, (2nd floor), Holland Christian Homes, Brampton, for the last three years. Sadly missed by her husband, Leen Rehorst, Brampton, Ont. Lovingly remembered by her children and grandchildren, Annette & John Hummel - Goderich ON; Bryan, Michael, Andrea John & Olga Rehorst - Toronto ON Sylvia, Victor Frances & Al Spaling - Wingham ON Ryan, Sonya, Julia, Candace Adrian & Helen Rehorst - Teeswater ON; Cassandra, Matthew, Jacob Remembered by her many friends at Holland Christian Homes, Brampton. Survived by 3 brothers and 2 sisters. Predeceased by 2 brothers and 2 sisters. Funeral service was held at Beattie-Falconer Funeral Home, Clinton, Ontario on Wednesday, May 15, 2002. Interment Clinton Cemetery. Correspondence address: 7900 McLaughlin Rd. Apt. 708 CT, Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7</p>
		<p>Personal Healthy, kind, Christian lady, age 65-70, active member of CRC, living in Eastern Ontario, would like to correspond and/or meet kind gentleman of similar age and interests such as traveling, socializing, etc. Respond to file #2734, 4-261 Martindale Rd. St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1</p>
		<p>Job Opportunities A dynamic, growing and multi-staffed church is looking for a half-time director of worship and the arts to help us grow in the area of worship, music and the arts. We worship in two service formats (blended and contemporary style) and follow a multiple team approach. Areas of responsibility include worship leading, team development, and worship service production. If you're a self-starter, a team player, and above all, have a heart of worship, we want to hear from you. Please send your enquiries and/or resume by June 25, 2002 to First CRC, 3600 15A St. S.W. Calgary, AB T2T 5P8 Ph: 403-243-2244 E-mail: firstcrc@shaw.ca</p>
		<p>Event Zion CRC of Oshawa, Ontario, (at Adelaide E. & Central Pkwy.) invites you to a heritage (Dutch) service on Sunday, June 30th at 2:30 p.m. The guest preacher will be the Rev. Jacob Kuntz. Social hour to follow the service.</p>
<p>Birthday "Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father" PH #408 We praise and thank God for his goodness to us as we celebrate the 40th birthday (June 21st) of Marilyn Van Geest May the Lord bless you in the year to come. With love, your parents Len and Lenie Also with love from your sisters and brothers-in-law, Julie & John, Helen & Gerrie, Susan & Rick along with the nephews and nieces. An OPEN HOUSE is to be held on Sat. June 22 from 3 to 5 p.m. at the Calvary CRC on Hwy. 8 in W. Flamborough (corner Middletown Rd.) Home Address: RR 2 Waterdown, ON L0R 2H2 Ph: 905-628-5624 E-mail: lhvangeest@aol.com</p>		

JUNE 17, 2002

Classifieds

Church News	Miscellaneous	Job Opportunities
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New Address:

Rev. John Van Dyk, emeritus
36 - 413 Linwell Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2M 7Y2
E-mail: jvd499@aol.com

For Rent

Attention Brock and Niagara College Students. House to share with students in central St. Catharines. On bus line route and close to mall. Contact Anita at 905-684-5806.

Miscellaneous

10 things you can do right now to help your bones!

- Turn that coffee into a café latte
- Get off the bus two stops early and walk the rest of the way home
- Quench your thirst with milk or a calcium-fortified beverage
- Use the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator
- Just 15 minutes of summer sun each day should provide you with all the vitamin D you need
- Try tofu or yogurt in your salad dressing instead of mayonnaise – or add almonds, sesame seeds or beans to boost your calcium intake even more
- Quit smoking
- Park at the far end of the mall parking lot and walk to the entrance
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about adding a calcium supplement, like TUMS to your daily routine if you can't get enough calcium in your diet
- At your next check-up, ask your doctor about your risk of osteoporosis

- News Canada

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Job Opportunities

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY Full-time and Part-time Building Custodians SHALOM EVERGREEN TERRACE

275 Main St. E.
Grimsby, Ontario

The Board of Directors of Shalom Evergreen Terrace Non-Profit Senior Apartments Inc. is seeking **both a full-time** (38 hrs./wk.) **and part-time** (15hrs./wk.) **Building Custodian** for its 98 unit senior's apartment building soon to be completed in Grimsby.

Under the supervision of the Property Manager, the Custodians will be responsible for general repair and maintenance of the project, both interior and exterior, and for general appearance and security of this 5 storey structure. Proponents must be familiar with cleaning and maintenance materials, equipment and techniques used for multi-residential apartment buildings and with the operation and maintenance of building systems such as air make-up, bulk heating and air-conditioning and fire safety. The successful candidate must have at least 5 years of related experience and a WHIMS training certificate. The successful applicant will be required to share an on-call schedule. Preference will be given to applicants living within 25 kms. of Grimsby.

If qualified and interested in either position, please submit a resume detailing your education, past and present employment history, community involvement and a minimum of 3 references to:



Hiring Committee
Shalom Evergreen Terrace
12 Bartlett Avenue
Grimsby, Ontario L3M 4N5

by no later than 4:30 p.m., Friday, July 19, 2002.

CHURCH MISSION CONSULTANT

The Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) has a part-time opening for a Church Mission Consultant with Christian Reformed World Missions (Canada). The purpose of the position is to assist churches in gauging their commitment to missions, and in expanding their vision for and connection to international missions.

A diploma or degree in Communications with a minimum of two years experience in Adult Learning is required. An understanding of Christian Reformed World Missions and its mission strategies is preferred. The ability to travel and work flexible hours is required.

In keeping with our Equal Opportunity policy, persons from racial/ethnic groups are encouraged to apply.

A detailed position description is available upon request. For consideration, please submit your resume and letter of interest by **June 14, 2002.**

Director of Personnel
Christian Reformed Church in North America
3475 Mainway, PO Box 5070 STN LCD 1
Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8 Canada
905-336-2920 Fax 905-336-8344
Email: colemann@crcna.org

Miscellaneous

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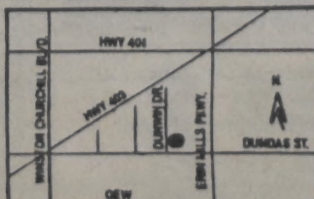
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Christian Courier is a ministry of Reformed Faith Witness. All gifts of \$10 or more are tax deductible and will receive an official receipt. Please make cheques payable to: **Reformed Faith Witness.**

Classifieds

Job Opportunities

Development Director
Position available 2002 - 2003 school year. **1 year 20 % position**
Jarvis District Christian School is looking for a person with strong Public Relation skills to promote our school to the Christian community. For more information on qualifications, job description, responsibilities and salary, please contact the school at 519-587-4444 or e-mail.
Please forward your resume to:
Jarvis District Christian School,
PO Box 520, Jarvis, ON N0A 1J0
E-mail at jdcsc@kwic.com

CARPET INSTALLER - If you are an experienced carpet and flooring installer or an apprentice and looking for a change of scenery, give us a call. We have an immediate opening for a qualified installer who is interested in working with fellow Christians in a long established family business. Contact Richard at Hamstra Carpet One, Strathroy, ON
Ph: 519-245-1752 Fax: 519-245-2660
E-mail hamstra@exculink.com

Bed & Breakfast

Visiting the Niagara Peninsula? Stay for a night or more at:
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www.jdnet.nl/travellershome

For Rent

Georgian Shores Cottage is now renting. Fully furnished lakefront cottage that sleeps 8. Located on Georgian Bay in the heart of the Georgian Triangle tourist area. Visit our web page at www.bmts.com/~gregayrh/ to see pictures and learn more about Georgian Shores. New low rate of \$550/wk, \$50 less is booked before June 15. For info: 519-538-5581 or: gregayrh@bmts.com

Miscellaneous

Huntley's Used Christian Books at 114 Lake St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 5X8. We buy and sell used Christian books. Open Tuesday - Saturday 10:00 - 5:00. 905-988-9223, e-mail: books@interpc.ca

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REDEEMER

University College

invites applications for the position of

Assistant Director of Financial Aid

Responsibility is given for managing the operation of the Financial Aid Office. This includes providing training, support, and coordinating and supervising the work of Financial Aid staff who are responsible for counselling applicants and students, providing relevant, requested information for their sponsors, and promoting and administering various award programs.
Qualifications: Bachelor's Degree and work experience in college / university recruitment or financial aid.

Please direct inquiries to the
Human Resources Director
Redeemer University College
777 Garner Road East
Ancaster, ON
L9K 1J4

Tel: 905-648-2131 x4230

Applicants are encouraged to fax or email their application materials.

FAX: 905-648-2134

email: jvgeest@redeemer.on.ca

All serious replies are appreciated. However, only candidates invited for interviews will be contacted.

MUTUAL SUPPORT, a non-profit, parent-model, Christian agency providing residential foster care for children in the Niagara region invites applications for the full-time position of:

House Parent(s)

To fulfill our program philosophy of providing care for at-risk children in a setting that closely replicates a healthy family unit, this is an ideal position for a married couple that wishes to make a serious commitment to helping children that are in long-term care. More than a job, this is a lifestyle choice that can include working alongside your partner in a home-like setting.

Successful candidates would demonstrate an ability to implement Mutual Support's philosophy and Policies, and adhere to its core program values. Applicants should be able to demonstrate their commitment to working with children through previous educational paths, bodies of experience, volunteerism, or ministries to children. A competitive salary is paid to each spouse.

Applicants may apply in writing, including a resume and cover letter to:

Randy Klassen

Associate Director -

Human Resources

Fenwick, ON L0R 1C0

For information, call 905 892-4332

Please visit our web site at

<http://www.mutualsupport.net>



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Miscellaneous

I have benefited greatly from my interaction with ICS faculty and students.

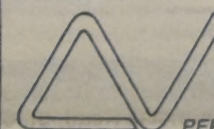
Richard Mouw, President,
Fuller Theological Seminary, California



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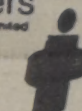
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Job Opportunity

FIRST CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH of Thunder Bay, Ontario (established in 1950)

is prayerfully **seeking a pastor** through whose ministry we would be nurtured spiritually at all age levels, in order to equip us for outreach and challenge us to focus on our vision and fulfil our mission. We are a caring congregation of 120 families made up of 475 members. We are located close to an excellent Christian School (K-10). There are two sister churches and a Community Outreach Centre, sponsored by the three local Christian Reformed Churches. If you feel led to respond to our need of a pastor, we invite you to please contact us for our church profile. Please direct your inquiries to:

Mr. D. Kaemingk,

Chairperson of the Pastor Search Committee
205-110 Hill St.

Kakabeka Falls, ON POT 1W0

Phone: (807) 473-5717; if busy (807) 935-5735

E-mail: derk@tbaytel.net

PICTURE THIS! You can advertise in *Christian Courier's* Business and Service Directory once a month for only: \$25 + GST. Call: 1-800-969-4838 for details.

Events/Advertising

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

- June 15 Spring of Hope Concert, Wine Tour, Dinner & Concert at Stonechurch Vineyards in Niagara -on-the-Lake and featuring the Ambassador Chr. Male Chorus. Proceeds to Niagara Warehouse of Hope and Chr. Ref. World Mission (water & medical projects in Nigeria) For Reservations & tickets: 905-935-3535
- June 15,16 CRC St. Thomas, Ont. celebrating 50th anniversary with picnic and service. Info: Jan Vandergeest 519-631-5285 or e-mail: jan@gtm.on.ca
- June 15 Gunneger Picnic, starting anytime before lunch, Grand River Conservation Auth. Park, Rockwood, Ont. Auth. charges admission fee but picnic free. For information, phone 1-519-235-0719
- June 19 Hollandse Dag 10 a.m. First CRC 310 Kingscourt Av. Kingston, Ont. Speaker: Jim Kooistra, Topic: "Bloeien in de beste jaren" For info call 613-546-5615
- June 20 Zion CRC, Oshawa, Ont Dutch service and social. June 30, 2:30 pm. Rev. J. Kuntz speaker. See ad.
- June 22, 23 Blenheim CRC, Blenheim, Ont. celebrating 50th anniversary with dinner, social, and worship. Call 519-352-1772 or 519-674-2171 for info.
- June 22, 23 Maranatha CRC, Cambridge. Retirement celebration. Pastor Ralph & Anne Koops. For info, call Mary at 519-623-3788 or Ann at 519-623-5261. (or see ad May 20 issue)
- July 1 Pinehurst Conservation Area, Paris, Ont. Frisian Picnic. See ad in this issue.
- July 13,14 Lindsay CRC, Lindsay, Ont. celebrating 50th anniversary with dinner and service. Call :705-328- 0177 Fax:705-328-3156 or E-mail: lawilms@sympatico.ca
- Aug 24 Clinton & District Christian School 40th year reunion. For information on events, call 519-482-7851.
- Oct 19,20 First CRC of Chilliwack B.C. 50th anniversary For info & billeting: call Erna Maarhuis 604-794-7140 or e-mail pjonda@telus.net

Christian Courier helps Christians across North America apply their living faith to the business of living. Your donation to Reformed Faith Witness supports this ministry. Along with our thanks for your cheque, we'll send you a tax receipt for donations of \$10 (Cdn.) or more. Our address is: Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Road, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

FROM COAST TO COAST

THE BACK TO GOD HOUR

English Radio:
Back to God Hour

Television:
Primary Focus

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Burns Lake - CFLO	9:15 am	1400
Osoyoos - CJOR	8:00 am	1490
Penticton - CKOR	8:00 am	800
Port Alberni - CJAV	7:00 pm	1240
Prince George - CIRX	7:00 am	94.3
Princeton - CHOR	8:00 am	1400
Smithers - CFBV	9:15 am	1230
Summerland - CHOR	8:00 am	1450
Vernon - CJIB	9:30 pm	940

ALBERTA

Brooks - CIBQ	8:00 am	1340
Ft. McMurray - CJOK	8:30 am	1230
High River - CHRB	6:30 pm	1140
Edmonton - CJCA	6:00 pm	930
Westlock - CFOK	7:30 am	1370

SASKATCHEWAN

Estevan - CJSL	8:00 am	1280
Weyburn - CFSL	8:00 am	1190

MANITOBA

Altona - CFAM	9:30 am	950
Steinbach - CHSM	8:00 am	1250
Winnipeg - CKJS	9:00 am	810

ONTARIO

Atikokan - CHAK	9:30 am	1240
Chatham - CFCO	6:30 am	630
Fort Frances - CFOB	9:30 am	640
Guelph - CJOY	8:30 am	1460
Hamilton - CHAM	7:30 am	820
Kapuskasing - CKAP	7:00 am	580

London - CKSL	7:00 am	1410
Newmarket - CKDX	9:00 am	88.5
Oshawa - CKDO	8:00 am	1350
Owen Sound - CFOS	7:00 am	560
Pembroke - CHVR	10:00 am	96.7
Samia - CHOK	7:30 am	1070
Stratford - CJCS	8:30 am	1240
Windsor - CKLW	7:30 am	800
Wingham - CKNX	10:30 am	920

NEW BRUNSWICK

Saint John - CHSJ	9:00 am	94.1
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PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown - CFCY	7:00 am	630
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NOVA SCOTIA

Bridgewater - CKBW	7:30 am	100C
Digby - CKDY	6:00 am	1420
Halifax - CFDR	8:30 am	780
Liverpool - CKBW	7:30 am	94.5
Kentville - CKEN	8:30 am	1490
Middleton - CKAD	8:30 am	1350
New Glasgow - CKEC	7:30 am	1320
Shelburne - CKBW	7:30 am	93.1
Sydney - CJCB	7:00 am	1270
Weymouth - CKDY	8:30 am	103.1

Kid's Corner-Radio

Drayton Valley, AB - CIBW	8:30 am-Sunday 92.9fm
Nordeg, AB - CHBW	8:30 am-Sunday 93.9fm
Rocky Mtn. House, AB - CHBW	8:30 am-Sunday 94.5fm
Prince Rupert, BC - CIAJ	10 am-Saturday 100.7fm
Niagara Falls, ON - CJRN	7:30am-Sunday 710am

ALBERTA

Lethbridge - CJIL	Monday - 10:00 pm
	Saturday - 3:00 pm
ONTARIO - CTS	Saturday - 7:30 pm

Check your local listings for cable outlets airing Primary Focus.

PACIFIC — B.C. ... 2 pm & 10 pm Sunday.

MOUNTAIN — AB ... 3 pm & 11 pm

CENTRAL — SK & MB 4 pm Sunday & 12 am Monday

EASTERN — ON & QC ... 5 pm Sunday & 1 am Monday

ATLANTIC — NB, NS, PEI ... 6 pm Sunday & 2 am Monday

NFLD ... 6:30 pm Sunday & 2:30 am Monday

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August 24th, 2002

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17 month commemorative calendar available to order.

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Paul Weithman & Nicholas Wolterstorff



Two distinguished Christian philosophers, Paul Weithman, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame and Nicholas Wolterstorff, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy of Religion at Yale University, will explore the complex relation between religion and political debate in a secular, pluralist liberal democracy. This free one-day event held at ICS is open to the public and will be of interest to philosophers, political and legal theorists, theologians, and church activists.

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Frisian Picnic



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News

King's Christian Collegiate has grand opening



PHOTOS COURTESY KING'S CHRISTIAN COLLEGIATE

The finished product: King's Christian Collegiate's new building in Oakville, Ont.

CC Staff

OAKVILLE, Ont. — After much planning and construction, King's Christian Collegiate in Oakville, Ont., has opened the doors of its new school building. The school actually started offering classes last fall, but until now,

students and teachers have worked in rented facilities.

School is Bible-based, prayer-infused

At the Grand Opening ceremonies held May 4, Principal Jim Vanderkooy shared words of appreciation and vision for the future of the school in a speech to supporters.

"If you do not remember anything else from this ceremony I would hope that you remember that this school is Bible-based and prayer-infused," asserted Vanderkooy. "Today we remind each other that our future success is dependent on our

willingness to pray continuously and to gain our insights from divine revelation.

Vanderkooy thanked those involved with the construction of the school, including Glenn Reinders and Al Tadero the lead architects designers "for creating a design

that reflects what was imagined two years ago."

Sharing a vision

Sharing a vision of the school's future, Vanderkooy stated, "It is our goal to equip students for the challenges and opportunities of life, able to understand their subject matter with clarity and insight. Students who are able discern right from wrong. Graduates who respect contrary viewpoints while steering a personal path that acknowledges Jesus Christ to be their Lord and Savior, viewpoints that acknowledge a loving God who has supreme control of everything that ever was and ever will be. We are confident that these graduates will make a difference because values do matter. They will make a difference to the lives they touch as they fan out into the global village...."

"The future is bright and filled with promise for choice in education. This school provides a new choice to parents seeking the best for their children. Let us continue the journey.... Our God has presented us with an awesome challenge, the challenge to "equip students to grow in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man (Luke 2:52)."



Students enjoy refreshments at the school's grand opening ceremonies.



Above: Music teacher Christel Kirstein teaches a music class at King's Christian Collegiate. Below: the school's new gymnasium.



Got any great family recipes you'd like to share?

Then why not send them to *Christian Courier*. Over the summer months, we would like to publish some interesting family recipes sent in by our readers. Please send them to us by mail to: *Christian Courier*, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON, L2W 1A1 By fax to: 905-682-8313, or by e-mail to: ccjournal@aol.com



News Digest

Sugar with that asteroid

LOS ANGELES — How do you stop a km.-wide asteroid from hitting the Earth? By sprinkling sugar on it, according to Italian astronomer Andrea Milani.

Asteroid 1950 DA is scheduled to hit the Earth on March 16, 2880 — a Saturday, reports the *Los Angeles Times*. Talk about ruining a weekend. The projected impact would burn forests, cause tidal waves and turn the skies black.

But with such an advance warning, it is possible to deflect the asteroid off of its course gradually. One way would be to explode nuclear weapons near the asteroid. But a gentler and sweeter solution proposed by Milani would be to alter the color of the asteroid by adding white paint or even powdered sugar to its surface. This would lighten the pressure of photons (particles of light) on the surface, altering the asteroid's course.

Maybe I'm a Mazda

KIEL, Germany (Ananova) — A German woman managed to drive off in a stranger's Mazda after agreeing to borrow her sister's Volkswagen. Police say her Volkswagen keys worked for both the door and ignition of the Mazda and the woman didn't realize her mistake until hours later. The 42-year-old was borrowing the Volkswagen from her sister in Kiel but got confused between the two. The cars were parked together and both were white.

She only noticed when she got back into the car to return it to her sister later in the day. She immediately called police. The Mazda owner had reported his car stolen in the meantime. Officers say the woman, who has not been named, will not be charged.

Canada's official horse

OTTAWA (CP) — Despite a few "nays," Canada's MPs recently voted to recognize the Canadian horse as this country's official national horse. The horse's ancestors came to Canada from the stables of Louis XIV in the mid-1600s. Since then, the breed has developed unique traits adapted to Canada's harsh environment. Twice, it came close to extinction, but now there are 3,000.

Ontario Liberal MP Murray Calder, who introduced the bill, says, "Like our immigrants, it came from abroad, but adapted itself to Canadian conditions."